

The Psychological Novel as Represented in the Work of George Elliot

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"The psychological novel,
as represented in the work
of George Eliot."



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The Psychological Novel as Represented in the Work of George Eliot

The Psychological Novel.

Although the term psychological novel is a familiar one in literary discussion, the definer will find himself in some difficulty in accurately establishing his limits. If he takes the term broadly, he will have to find place on his shelf for so many books, that the name will have little classifying power; if he takes the term in a narrower sense, he will be able to sweep from his shelf all but a row of purple novels, but in the heap of the discarded will lie the great number of books which he desires to keep upon the shelves.

All novels have the psychological element in them. Fiction claims to be a picture of life; even the most impossible romance asserts that its actors are human beings. To present a picture of human life without some psychological power would be an impossibility.

However, in a great mass of works of fiction, the so-called "living beings" are but wooden puppets and the hand that moves the wires is not even hidden. But we cannot dismiss this class of books with contempt, for on some of these mimic stages the gymnastics are so entertaining that we forgive the puppets for being wooden and moved by wires. This type of novelist cares nothing about

the gray matter of his hero's brain, is indifferent concerning his possession or lack of a conscience; he finds the interest of life in stirring action: the clash of weapons in a tavern brawl or the jingle of money which the highwayman pockets is of more interest to him than a vision of the workings of a human heart.

Here, then, are books which do not belong upon the shelf, for the novel steeped in melodrama is rarely from the pen of a psychologist. His very love of the exaggerated makes him unable to observe with appreciation the average, quiet life or to see the value of painstaking processes of mind and heart.

But other books beside the purpose-novel must remain

upon the shelf. This type certainly belongs there, it is a psychological novel with intensity, but it is not, as some have tried to make us believe the typical psychological novel. It is the extreme; it is what some earnest souls with a desire to teach have made of the psychological novel. The purpose-novel is a sugar-coated pellet; the story is the sugar which induces us to take the medicine; sometimes it is very good sugar, but the fact remains that it is a coat for medicine. By the term "purpose-novel" we do not mean merely a novel which has an underlying purpose in it or a problem worked out within its pages but what the Germans call the "tendenz-roman". Its reason for being is the theory to be presented

or the proposition to be argued; it is really a tract in the disguise of a novel. It cannot have artistic value for it is not a work of art. It cannot be good fiction for its problem is a vampire which sucks all the life-blood out of the story.

It is as exaggerated a view of life in its way as the melodramatic novel, for its purpose is, not to give a true picture of life, but to make the course of events present proof to the reader that the author's theory is true. In his desire to make proselytes, he may exaggerate unconsciously, or his zeal for his cause may lead him consciously to present what is not true.

We find such an example in the Southerners' view of

"Uncle Tom's Cabin". They asserted the book to be an exaggeration and thus an untrue picture of slavery days in the South. Perhaps Mrs. Stowe herself as literary critic might have admitted that the book was not an accurate study of a section, but her defense would have been that she was not trying to give an analytic, unbiased study of Southern life; her subject was slavery. She used the stirring story as a bait to win readers for anti-slavery; she tried to make of the book a trumpet call and in that she succeeded. But, its mission ended, the book declines. Few read it today except for a historic interest. The story is good but it is so overbalanced by its purpose that it cannot retain as

a novel the place it was as a tract

But when convinced that our definition is untrue if too broad or too narrow, how shall we find the golden mean? There is certain treatment of the essential elements of a novel, character study, plot, and purpose which makes it necessary to apply the term "psychological" to a book.

Character study must be more prominent than action. There may be action but it must not be considered for itself, for the mere interest it furnishes, but as a revelation of the character of the human beings studied or an instrument in their development. Action must be true, it must accord with the character of the one asserted to be

doing the deed; it must be caused by inner activity to which it corresponds or its use must be as an effect upon that inner activity. In other words, the psychological novelist presents the deeds of his hero but they are of more importance in showing us what sort of man he is or is growing to be than as deeds. The psychologist is interested in this inner life - that is his theme - and he never ceases scrutinizing it. Thus it is that the outer life pictured in psychological novels is made of less importance than the inner life. This explains why people not of an introspective turn of mind find novels like those of James or Howells dull.

The psychologist is interested in the "why" rather than the "how"

of deeds. It is the motive which makes the deed to him. Murder has but one name - crime, but the psychologist does not long contemplate it as a deed but seeks its origin in the heart of the doer, finding there the difference between Beatrice di Cenci and Richard III, Charlotte Corday and Bill Sykes. He is interested in the "how" of deeds too as they reveal the doer; in the scene before and after Duncan's murder, though the details are repellent in themselves, they possess intensest interest, not as a mere study of crime, but for their revelation of the souls of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth.

The psychological novelist aims to give more than merely a study of the individual who is his central figure or even of

many individuals. He has under his microscope a cross-section of society. It may not be the whole of society but merely one order of it: Thackeray shows the life of the upper classes in England, Dickens the lower; it may be the life of all orders within a limited district which is usually George Eliot's method. The psychological novelist gives us this view of society with a purpose: this purpose may be merely to present a good picture - "art for art's sake" - or it may have more of the moral element in it as Thackeray's satirizing society's vice and folly or Kingsley's direct teaching. All psychologists have one purpose in common in presenting a picture of life: to tell the truth. Whether they

write romances like Hawthornes, satires like Thackerays or make the literary photographs so popular in American literature a few years ago, their purpose is to show real life, not to color or distort it. In this respect, all novelists of this class might claim the label of realists even though they are not realists another sense.

It is by no means necessary that the psychological novel be plotless. This impression prevails with some people for the reason that they regard as the class that limited division of the class, - the American realists, headed by Henry James. With this group of novelists, the purpose is to present a clear-cut dispassionate picture of life in certain circles of

society; the study is more of outer than inner life, the conversation, the actions, facial expression - all that can be observed by the spectator - is described but we are not allowed to see more than an observer could see. In fact, the aim appears to be to make a photograph. The author holds himself apart from his work: we do not know what sort of man he is, we only know what keen eyes he has.

But this is only one type of the psychological novel. There are others in which we have revealed to us all the secrets of the soul life, every thought or half-formed desire; we know the individual described better than he could possibly know himself. In this class of novel,

we sometimes have almost as uneventful a story as the Henry James sort. It is the history of a soul with its changes which we are allowed to study and in this the outer life sinks into relative unimportance. But we forgive the absence of war and duels; it is as in reading Thoreau; does it matter to us, when we have learned to see with his eyes, that he tells us of an obscure New England wood bordering a pond?

There is another class of the psychological novel in which we have more action. To be sure, the inner life is still of more importance, but the outer life is the mirror of the inner; it acts upon, and in turn is acted upon by the inner life. The story is usually one of struggle

with development or degeneration as the theme so the chief interest is the psychological one but there may be considerable complication of affairs and action as well, making a plot. Deeds are of importance in the psychological novel, but the difference between this sort of novel and others is that their importance in this case is not that of plot-making. Mrs. Gaskell a genuine psychological novelist, took as her foundation theory in novel-writing, "All deeds however hidden and long passed by have their eternal consequences." The psychologist is more interested in these eternal consequences, - the influence upon the development of character and the destiny of human souls than in the deeds.

Every psychological novelist has a purpose; in some of them it is "art for art's sake"; in more it is an intellectual purpose but generally it is ethical. The individual who takes as his chosen study the human mind and heart and makes it his life-work to write of what he learns, usually has a strong idea of right and wrong and an earnest wish to make of his novels books which are worth while to the people who read them. The purpose, whatever it is, makes the book. Even the "art-for-art's-sake" novels are built upon some view or theory. In looking through a copy of Howell's "Indian Summer", I found the margins pencilled with the disgusted remarks of

some young reader, who at last in his mystification, inquired in underscored capitals, "Is this book meant for a burlesque?" Yet, though the raison d'être was so invisible to this young person, it is there clearly enough; the whole book is an exposition of the difference between the views, feelings, and life of maturity and youth.

An intellectual and moral purpose color a story still more strongly, although not till the purpose wins in the fight and overpowers the tale, do we dub the book "purpose-novel." Mrs. Humphrey Ward's books are good examples of the influence of the problem. Every one of her novels are problem novels from "Robert Elsmere" which aims to

propagate Unitarianism and "Marcella" which deals with the landlord question to "Eleanor", so overweighted with instruction that it must take its place in the ranks of "purpose novels". It may be that the critics have informed Mrs. Ward of this last fact, for her latest book, "Lady Rose's Daughter", while a polished piece of work and a minute psychological study, has no instructive matter in it and lacks the ethical purpose.

"David Grieve" is too painstakingly developed, every stage so carefully constructed, the details so minute, that "David" loses reality for us, he is not quite flesh and blood because the machinery by which he is constructed is a little too visible. This is not true in "Robert Elsmere", although Elsmere's development

is as carefully managed and shown as *Cyrie's*. Mrs. Ward's books are intensely full of problem, but they are also intensely interesting as mere stories, so they are saved from being left to accumulate dust as "purpose novels."

To me, the one which seems most artistic is "Helbeck of Bannisdale". To be sure, it has much study of the Catholic religion, as *Eleanor* has, but the main purpose is the psychological study of two very interesting characters, Helbeck and Laura, these two forming a contrast in type, for the one is a Jesuit lacking but the last touches, while the other is an atheist by nature and training. The situations and complications make the

story an intense one, the attraction by nature and repulsion by belief bringing the story to a place where but one end is possible - the tragic. We are left at the end with a lesson in our minds which the book teaches powerfully, yet does not once state directly; the pity of it that the power of human love which can so bless, cannot rise above creed.

Whether we believe this or not, Mrs. Ward has impressed upon us her purpose, tolerance writ large. But strong as the purpose is, it overbalances neither character study nor plot, for the three are managed together harmoniously, producing as a result a work of art.

Such a book may serve as a type of the psychological

novel at its best - with character study finely done and foremost, with action interesting in itself and closely connected with the character study, with a purpose which is worth while and taught, not by direct statement, but by being woven into the very fibre of character study and plot without injuring the value of either.

This may be summarized tersely in the best definition of the psychological novel which I have ever seen, that of Cross; "It is a novel of the inner life. The outward sequence of its incidents is the correlative of an inner sequence of thought and feeling which is brought into harmony with an ethical formula and accounted for in an analysis of motive".

We cannot trace the history of the psychological novel as such for it did not develop as a form in itself but as an element in other novels. Consequently we must look for the history of this form in the history of the novel itself. As stated before, all novels have to some extent, a psychological element. In all novels which are really good pieces of work, this element is present in considerable strength. In the great novels, it is one of the strongest elements. Why, then, are these not given the title of psychological novel? The presence of the psychological element in a novel does not constitute the psychological novel. Any novel to be good must contain that element. The psychological novel does not

merely contain this element; it is built on it as a foundation, made out of it. The problem is the creating force: the plot must hinge upon it; it must have profound interest for the characters and a weighty bearing upon their development; in brief the problem must be a vital part of the book. We may, then, have a book whose character-study is not to be excelled, and with a purpose which is well-impressed, yet the problem has not that permeating quality; the plot is strong and of too much interest in itself for the book to be classed as a purely psychological novel. There are many such novels found among the great works of fiction. Thackeray and Dickens may be listed among their authors.

In contrast with these novels, so strong in character-study and purpose that we feel almost tempted to try to force a place for them inside the border we would place the genuine type of the psychological novel and the best one ever written as well, "Les Misérables." It is the study of the development of a human soul. The French peasant whose knowledge and feeling are not far above those of the dumb brute is made through unjust law a galley-slave and as a result of this brutal experience, is tempted to the verge of becoming a criminal. He is saved by the influence of the human goodness of one good man. He continues to develop through hardships, temptation, success,

passing through terrible crises which threaten to be soul-destroying until at last we would say of him "He is an angel", were it not that it is the intensely human element in him which makes his life-triumph glorious.

Victor Hugo follows the revelation of Christ: "He who loseth his life for my sake shall find it" and takes Jean Valjean through the Wilderness and Gethsemane to the height which, without sacrilege we may call a human Mount of Transfiguration.

In De Foe we find little psychology: he tells of outward events; we know what sort of a man Robinson Crusoe was, a rather wild youth sobered by wreck and grown religious through the influence of Nature, but we are far more interested

in his making of pottery, and his mode of living than in Crusoe himself; it is his solitude which renders him interesting.

We might say that, in one way, there is some psychology in Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" in that it is a satire upon human nature and therefore, that we might call a study of it. But children's excited pleasure in reading the book shows us that its chief success is that of narrative.

Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley Papers" has considerable psychology in it; it is not a story but the sketch of a man. We are interested in the monotonous country life, the most trivial happenings, his visit to the theatre, to Vauxhall gardens, to church; because in them we see the humors and idiosyncracies of the lovable old Sir Roger.

"Pamela", but not the psychological novel. We might say to be sure that there is such an element present for heart-agonies make up a good percentage of the hot-house sentimentalism of his stories, but the thrilling adventures of his tortured Clarissas and Pamelas in their efforts to escape from the toils of a Lovelace, were evidently of far more interest to author and readers than the heart-break of the lady or the perfections of a Sir Charles Grandison

Fielding, who so despised the lachrymose "sensibility" of Richardson that he was inspired by a desire of burlesquing to write his first novel, has, with all his roistering more of the psychological element Mr. Beers quotes someone's apt saying that - "Richardson knew

man, but Fielding knew men". Fielding is filled with zest for his tavern brawls and tavern-maid love affairs, but he creates real people: coarse as they are, his Squire Western and Tom Jones are vigorous, well-drawn, typical portraits. Fielding gives an accurate and an honest picture; he was competent to do so, for he had lived the life he described.

Beers sums up Smollett very cleverly: "Both Fielding and Smollett were of the hearty British 'beef-and-beer' school. . . . Tobias Smollett was an inferior Fielding with a difference. . . . 'The generous wine of Fielding', says Taine, 'in Smollett's hands becomes brandy of the dram-shop'." He depicts characters of low life and of the sea with considerable skill.

Sterne is a psychologist for his novels are created to portray a

a few pet characters; but his books, almost lacking connected action or plot and without a problem are no more entitled to the name psychological novel than "Sir Roger de Coverley".

There is much character-study in Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield". The incidents are planned to bring out traits, - the purchase of the gross of green spectacles at the fair for example. Dr. Primrose is as well and as humorously portrayed as Sir Roger de Coverley, and in addition, he and his family constitute the *dramatis personae* of an interesting comedy. There is even rather a strong hint of moral purpose the folly of foolish discontent over station.

In the romances of Scott we find some masterly character-

study, but that does not prevent them from being nearly the opposite type from the form under discussion. They are primarily action-novels, narratives of stirring deeds with the interest centered upon the deeds themselves. But Scott's actors are few of them puppets, rather men of blood and brawn, of masculine virtues and faults. His gentle women are dolls but he draws a Jeannie Deans with the master's touch. Hutton says: "Scott needed a certain largeness of type, a strongly marked class-life, and, where it was possible, a free out-of-doors life, for his delineations. No one could paint beggars and gypsies, and wandering fiddlers, and mercenary soldiers, and peasants, and farmers, and lawyers and magistrates, and preachers, and courtiers, and

statesmen, and best of all perhaps kings and queens, with anything like his ability.

A forerunner of the psychological novel appeared in the stories of Maria Edgeworth. She was followed by others notable chiefly for their attempt to produce this sort of literature rather than for results obtained.

But at last the psychological novel, long traced as an element in other novels, appears in its own form. In Mrs. Gaskell we find the first of her line, a predecessor of the great George Eliot herself. "Cranford" her best known book, is a study of village life, a novel of quiet tone whose paramount interest is the character-study. "Ruth" might be taken as the type of the purely psychological novel. Acting upon

her theory in fiction writing, that deeds never die, she gives us the study of the consequences of a decision on the lives of the characters, an act and the train of effects which followed. She gives us the analysis of motive, the detailed and careful study of the consequences of a deed and its influence upon character.

Jane Austen is a psychological novelist. She writes stories of quiet life, usually in the country; the happenings are the unimportant ones of every-day life, and all the force of the book is put upon the character-study. Her plots are slight, a love-affair which is a little impeded usually giving the only complications, while match-making schemes and neighborly visiting furnish incidents. She has not a very evident ethical purpose.

although some of her titles - as "Pride and Prejudice", "Sense and Sensibility" show that she considers her theory central. She usually gives us some sort of a moral, but it is not woven into the very fibre of the story, therefore does not have much force for the reader. George Eliot objected to Jane Austen's novels on this ground. Nevertheless her novels are artistic; evidently written for the mere love of writing, they fulfill their mission and entertain the reader with their humor and truth in character sketching. Sir Walter Scott, who admired her writings, said: "The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary common-place things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and sentiment, is denied me."

So arrived the psychological novel, of the "art-for-art's-sake" type, having, however, subordinate to this a little moral purpose. The psychological element in fiction had developed from its beginnings in Fielding until it was able to make a novel of itself. We find it strong in fiction from this time on.

Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" places great stress upon character-study. She gives us a heroine plain of face and humble, but by force of individuality, she makes herself no minor place among the heroines of fiction. Although the book has a rather melodramatic plot made out of the love story of Jane Eyre and Rochester, it is in its essence the study of two human hearts, - the passion and temptation and regeneration of the one, the integrity and faithfulness of the other.

Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" has the psychological element strongly present. The story has plenty of stirring action in the doings of the Doones and the tale of Lorna's life, but of almost equal importance is the psychology, - the study of the yeoman hero, the simple and sturdy John Ridd.

In Charles Reade's novels the character sketching is done with care. However his stories cannot be classed as psychological since the chief attention is held by the rather sensational plot.

George Meredith belongs in our class. He avows his principles openly; neither adventures nor events are to be made much of, his theory of the novel has for its basis the subtlest analysis of character, the inner rather than the outer life. He despises

sentimentalism and is a hater of shams. He tries to draw real people.

? Kingsley is a psychological novelist. His chief interest is in character study, the plot making itself subordinate and useful to it and, with the exception of "Hypatia", dealing with the life of the common people. Kingsley makes his problem or purpose evident and bases his story upon it. He sometimes has a double purpose, the one, moral, the other, intellectual; in "Two Years Ago", he treats of medicine and makes his moral purpose evident in the contrast of the high-flown poet, saturated with sensibility but morally boneless, and his doctor, Tom, rather earthy but a lover of Nature and Truth; in "Alton Locke" he treats of the Chartist movement and pleads for the recognition of the man

himself, putting aside the false and artificial standards of measuring of rank and wealth. "Alton Locke" is too much overbalanced by purpose; most novel-readers would tire of the sermon and abandon it; it is a good example of the genuine purpose novel.

Dickens and Thackeray have so many of the qualities of the psychological novelist that we hesitate not to place them within the border. Indeed, they are psychological novelists, but there is so much beside in their novels that they expand beyond the limits of this particular form. Both try to depict life as they see it and both make character study of great importance. Both write with moral purpose but they do not obtrude it to the detriment of

the story. "Dickens described London", says Bagehot, "like a special correspondent for posterity"; he pictures low life in London as no one else has ever done, he knew the slums and slum-people and as a result created Jo and Nancy and Bill Sykes. He aimed at and effected reforms, attacking debtors'-prisons, poor-laws, worthless schools, Court of Chancery, and what not. Yet his chief purpose was the legitimatization of fiction - to entertain - therefore he produces an artistic piece of work. Thackeray's character study is masterly as two or three of his portraits alone would prove, his Becky Sharp or Colonel Newcome or Henry Esmond or Penderennis. He pictures the upper classes of society that he may expose their vices, follies, and shams.

He pictures what he himself saw, for, he said, "I have no brains above my eyes. I describe what I see". His tool is satire. Yet, though both fulfill the requirements, they go beyond the psychological novel: their novels cannot be contained in the limits of that class; plot is made much of and for its own sake, humor in burlesque and satire respectively characterize them.

George Eliot is the master workman of them all in her own peculiar field, that of the psychological novel. In studying her work, we shall not only gain a knowledge of the best psychological novels but we shall learn by concrete example what the psychological novel is, for did she stand alone as a writer of fiction: of this type, the psychological

novel would yet exist.

In America, we have a great and typical psychological novelist in Hawthorne. All his work belongs in this class. In "Scarlet Letter" he created one of the greatest psychological novels ever written. His life-study was the human heart and it is his subject in every story, every romance. He saw life's sunshine and shadow; he knew and drew a Phoebe Pyncheon and a Roger Chillingworth. He studies sin and retribution, the path of the soul that goes down into the pit or up to heights celestial. "House of Seven Gables" is the record of the effect of a sin in connection with heredity; "Scarlet Letter" is the study of a life atonement for sin, an atonement which exalts a soul; "Marble Faun" is the study of a

human soul before and after crime. "Egotism, or the Bosom Serpent" and "Ethan Brand" are typical stories; both treat of sin in the human heart and are intense psychological studies. In fact, Hawthorne's work is all psychology; his short stories are allegories. "The Great Stone Face" is as pure allegory as "Pilgrim's Progress." Hawthorne did not study sin and decay with morbid interest but with a wholesome desire to purge, to "lend a hand" to humanity. He is a realist in manner, but an idealist in thought. Not a blind optimist, he sees into the black depths of the soul; not a pessimist, he does not believe the worst of human nature; with keen vision for both light and shadow, he makes of his work a search light. There flourished in America

what might be called a school of psychological novelists or American realists. Henry James was the leader and his "Daisy Miller" and "Portrait of a Lady" are typical. The aim is photographic, the method by presentation of well selected and numerous details; the results of observation are shown, but little inner life, and the man stands outside his work. W. D. Howells follows the lead of James, especially in his later books, but, having more of the "milk of human-kindness" in him evidently, shows a more personal interest in his characters.

A few years ago, the "realistic" novel was the novel of the day; the realism of each new book was discussed in critiques and reading circles and the reader with a relish for story, upon whose

taste the art-photograph of James palled, had to take comfort in Scott's romances or the dime-novel).

But that day is past. The novel of action has come into its own again and the fiction-fiend demands at the desk of the circulating library such wares as "When Knighthood Was in Flower", "Janice Meredith", "To Have and to Hold", "Richard Carvel." Wars, intrigues, duels, are again in vogue; the novel which puts on the disguise of a colonial or 1776 setting and styles itself "historical" is exceedingly popular.

The probable reason for the new fad is natural reaction. The Henry-James group spun too long and too exceedingly fine; the average reader stifled his yawns over the pages of James and looked intelligent when "realism" was

the topic for many a weary day, but the worm will turn, and so, following the law of supply and demand, the markets began to offer more highly colored wares. The greater number of people are not very introspective and read, as they go to the theatre, merely for entertainment. To these people stirring deeds are the very marrow of a novel. The "realism" fashion brought the novel to the place where deeds were almost ignored, action was neglected in fiction, and, in order to get its proper place again, it has first drawn the novel to the opposite extreme.

However, we may see in the light-fiction of the day character-sketches whose sales are amazing and whose popularity is as wide-spread as that of the latest

street song. In this list we find "David Harum", "Eben Holden", and "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch".

Though it would seem that for portrayal of character, humor is the requirement of the day, we find another class of books entirely lacking in humor, which revel in introspection and emotion.

The late anonymous serial in the "Century Magazine", "Confessions of a Wife" is a good example. Upon the public's taste for the autobiographical, must the silly and startling Mary MacLane have acted when she professed to turn her heart wrong side out and reveal what in delicacy she should have hidden. It is this same taste which causes the unholy greed for the love letters of famous men and women.

It is as hard to prophesy what the next turn of fiction will be as to foretell the next season's style in hats, but there are a few signs which we might put together to fortify a conjecture. Edith Wharton's novels are commanding sales; the serious reader has turned, evidently in desperation over the native product, to Tolstoi; the magazines tell us of the popularity in New York of Ibsen plays, and discuss the "problem play" in lengthy articles. In England, Mrs. Humphrey Ward is writing and marketing royalties; there are two Scotch writers whose forte is character sketching as is proved in Barrie's "Window in Thrums", "Sentimental Tommy" and sequel "Tommy and Grizel" and in Ian MacLaren's "Beside the Bonnie

Baiar Bush." Kipling unites in equal proportion, character, sketching and action and thus gets readers of two sorts.

We do not desire the return of the farnes realists; we view with distaste any prospect of an overdose of the extreme "purpose-novel", but we tire of the fad novels whose life is like that of the butterfly, basking a day in the sunshine of phenomenal sales, passing speedily into the night of oblivion and death. We are still waiting for "the great American novel", and, with our cousins across the water, look forward to a day when a master's hand shall again take up the pen.

Part II The Work of George Eliot
Section I: Plot, and
Character-study.
Chapter I: Plot

George Eliot's Work

We have endeavored to trace the slow development of the psychological element into the psychological novel; we have now reached its culmination in the work of George Eliot. We have been trying to see what the psychological novel in the abstract is; we have now the concrete. Mr. Cross's comprehensive definition could have been made from an examination of her works alone for she comprises within herself all the qualities of the true psychological novelist. In examining George Eliot's novels, we are studying the class, for her work may stand as the type of the genuine and best. There can be no question as to the choice of the individual for discussion in this field.

Plot.

George Eliot's plots are precisely of the sort which we might expect to find in the purely psychological novel. The element of sensationalism is entirely lacking. There is no use of mystery, melodrama or sensational climax. She uses no artificial means to heighten the interest of her stories; she does not strive for what is known as "dash" or "fire". She does not attempt to create plot for plot's sake. No action or climax is introduced because it will help to make a good plot. George Eliot did not wish to write novels of adventure but to present studies of life. She did not write to entertain idle pleasure-seeking novel-readers, but to arouse in her readers thoughts and emotions which would tend to make them better.

Her plots are, then, vitally affected by her psychological and ethical purpose. There is nothing at all improbable in them, nothing even remarkable. Her purpose was to present a true picture of life, of the everyday life which average humanity lives and she admits nothing which will give a single false touch to the picture.

The life she pictures is not only everyday life, but it is the everyday life of provincial districts. It is life which we who live it pronounce dull, which her own characters often find dull and deadening; but dull it is not to us when handled in a story by George Eliot. She presents it with such marvelous analysis, shows us such depth of meaning in it, that we are

enthralled; we see then that George Eliot knew the truth — that there can be nothing dull in the study of the human soul and human life.

It is her effort to present and gain our interest in the commonplace. Like her own Daniel Deronda she finds poetry and romance in the events of every-day life. She asserts: "And perhaps poetry and romance are as plentiful as ever in the world except for those phlegmatic natures, who, I suspect, would in any age have regarded them as a dull form of erroneous thinking. We note her next shaft: "They exist very easily in the same room with the microscope and even in railway carriages; what banishes them is the vacuum in gentlemen and lady passengers."

She finds the greatest significance in the commonplace: the tragedies and victories of the every-day life of average humanity is better worth our while to study, teaches George Eliot, than the career of a meteoric genius, which cannot teach us truths about humanity in general.

But George Eliot does not develop a Henry James photograph. Under the ever-present restriction of truth to average life, she uses her artistic talent to produce a good plot. She uses love affairs, sins and their consequences, complications, and climaxes as plot elements. But her plot material or what the Germans call "Stoff" for plot is not that of the ordinary novel. She satirizes the popular taste for the mere love-story.

"Miss Pippin adoring young Pumpkin, and dreaming along endless vistas of unvarying companionship, was a little drama which never tired our fathers and mothers and had been put into all costumes. Let but Pumpkin have a figure which would sustain the disadvantages of a short waisted swallow-tail, and everybody felt it not only natural but necessary to the perfection of womanhood that a sweet girl should at once be convinced of his virtue, his exceptional ability, and, above all, his perfect sincerity. But perhaps no persons then living—certainly none in the neighborhood of Tipton—would have had a sympathetic understanding for the dreams of a girl whose notions about marriage took their color entirely from an exalted

enthusiasm about the ends of life, an enthusiasm which was lit chiefly by its own fire, and included neither the niceties of the trousseau, the pattern of plate, nor even the honors and sweet joys of the blooming matron.

"We are not afraid of telling over and over again how a man comes to fall in love with a woman, and be wedded to her, or else be fatally parted from her. Is it due to excess of poetry or of stupidity that we are never weary of describing what King James called a woman's "makdom and her fairnesse," never weary of listening to the twanging of the old Troubadour strings, and are comparatively uninterested in that other kind of "makdom and fairnesse" which must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires.

--- For in the multitude of middle aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them in much the same way as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and alter the world a little!

It is the pathos in the marriage of a Dorothea to a Causabon, of Sydgate to Rosamund, of Gwendolen to Grandcourt, which has plot-interest for her. She is a master of pathos indeed, and the pathetic is a strong element in her stories. It supplies her with a few melodramatic scenes: Mirah dipping her cloak into the Thames before the plunge, Hetty and Dinah clinging to each other in the executioner's cart, Maggie and Tom Tulliver locked in each other's arms going

down in the flood. She presents
 crime: not the blood curdling sort
 of a Sherlock-Holmes tale, of a
 Wilkie Collins or Dickens, but the
 robbing of the old weaver's hoard
 by Hunstan Cass, the infanticide of
 Hetty, the revenge of Baldassarre.
 She finds dramatic elements in the
 career and punishment of a Bulshode
 or the election-day riot in a market
 town with its evil results upon Felix,
 or in the downward course of a
 Tito Melerna. The thwarting of a
 Maggie or a Dorothea by conventional
 society offers to this novelist more
 valuable plot elements than the
 loss of a throne. In *Romola*, she
 has historic material for her plot,
 but fails to put into such historic
 movement as the loss of power by
 the Medici, the alliance of Florence
 with France, and the threatening

of war with Italy, the interest which she puts into the life of Romola or Tito or Baldassarre.

George Eliot treats of real life indeed, but she asserts the dramatic interest of real life, that there is passion and poetry and tragedy and sublimity in it. Her theme is the commonplace but it is the apotheosis of the commonplace.

Her complex plots have been criticized for lack of unity and indeed the critics have good grounds for their complaint. "Middlemarch" falls into three separate stories, that of Mary Garth, of Dorothea, and of Sydgate; Daniel Deronda divides into two parts, the story of Gwendolen, and of Deronda. But when we consider each novel as a view of society, as the

incarnation of an ethical idea, we see the unity George Eliot saw when she created them. Dorothea's and Lydgate's lives show the thwarting power of society on an original and altruistic soul; the Garths show in their simple, ordinary lives success in the truest sense of the word achieved, though society fails to realize the fact.

Deronda's life though different from and distinct from Gwendolen's, is her inspiration; he becomes her ideal and her rescuer.

George Eliot's early plots are simple, her latest complex. The early ones are not, therefore, under the criticism of lack of unity and are pronounced her best. "Silas Marner" is a perfect example of the simple plot, "Mill on the Floss" is also praised, and "Adam Bede"

is pronounced as having the best plot of all her novels. Her earlier novels escape another criticism which assails the later ones, the presence of too much extraneous matter. Critics say that she inserts too much philosophical and scientific material as such. The critics have ground for their complaint here too: the scholar sometimes got the better of the novelist. But what her books lose thereby in unity, they gain in breadth and depth.

We can say that plot is subordinate to character study; it certainly is not the vital part of the book; It is not what takes hold upon the reader most, and it certainly was the subordinate element of the novel in George

Eliot's planning. But the use of the word subordinate may convey the false idea that the character-study and problem so overbalance the plot as to render it of little account. The fact is that the plot is intimately connected with character-study and problems created out of them.

The influence of human beings upon each other for good or ill is her theme. The exercise of this influence and the effects upon character and the resultant lives make the plot. The inner life makes the outer life with George Eliot so the plot is the direct outcome of the character-study. We might expect that the plots would suffer materially from her profound interest in the soul life, that her novels would become mere

psychological analysis. But George Eliot's people act as well as think, and psychological analysis includes the study of this action. This action is the plot material and is of the sort to make a good plot.

But although George Eliot's psychology does not rob the book of action, her analytical habit does interfere with plot. Her method of presenting character is not only by words and deeds but by her own direct analysis as well. She frequently stops the story to make an exhaustive analysis of her heroine's spiritual condition in that particular phase of her development. In most novelists we would condemn this vigorously as producing a halting story, but as in George Eliot's novels, we must understand the inner state to be able to understand

the outer life, we are content.

Her novels carry out the same idea which Mrs. Gaskell had: "All deeds however hidden and long passed by, have their eternal consequences." The first deliberate putting aside of Baldassarre's claim by Tito Melema ends its chain of effects only in the clutch of the dead fingers on the throat of the murdered Tito. The working out of this principle makes plot.

Thus we see that plot and problem are as interwoven as plot and character study. Her characters are created to carry out an idea, to teach a moral lesson by their lives, and the action in these intersecting lives constitutes the plot. The plot itself proves the problem for it shows how disaster or success come to humanity in character and life according as egoism or altruism prevails.

Chapter II Character-study-

Character study.

George Eliot could prove her right to be classed high in the first rank of novelists by her character study alone. Her marvelous ability can be accounted for but in one way, genius. Her characters are not puppets but living human beings. Their very imperfections which are so thick upon them prove them real people. George Eliot goes deeper, she shows us the best and the worst in the human heart, with all that lies between. Her people differ from one another materially. She knows and portrays "all sorts and conditions of men". Yet she enters understandingly and sympathetically into the thoughts and life of each. She possessed powers of keen observation and analysis, a strong and sympathetic

imagination, a wide knowledge of human nature, all united with an earnest determination to see and tell the truth.

She gives us her purpose in her own words: "Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experiences and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the people. Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life".

George Eliot treats character not only as individual but in the mass. She gives us the life of a whole district.

She is the novelist of provincial life. She deals with

the quiet English country and village life. In all of her books except her one historical novel, she pictures a country side, with its landed gentry, and country people, and its country town near by. She is the "still-life" artist. She deals with the monotonous, commonplace life of every day and finds passion and poetry in it. She shows us the hearts and lives of average humanity, people unknown outside their own district.

Her portrayal of provincial life is not only carefully and accurately done, but it has color. Her towns have atmosphere; "Middlemarch" is characterized as skillfully as any inhabitant; it has an individuality of its own.

The autobiographical element

in George Eliot's books is one explanation of the truth and vividness of these pictures. She spent her life until twenty or more years of age in the country. Several of her small towns are said to be pictures of towns in which she had lived. This reason also explains her remarkable knowledge of different classes of society. Her father was land agent for five large estates in Warwickshire and Marian had thus the best possible opportunity of observing closely the people of every strata of society.

She brought to this observation her analysis and sympathy which enabled her to understand thoroughly people wholly unlike herself, enabled her at will to think their thoughts and see from their

point of view.

She portrays understandingly the servants at the Hall, the laborers on the Hall Farm, the workers in the chalk-pits, a Denner, a Mrs. Holt, a Hagley, a Silas Marner, Adam Bede, Felix Holt. She gives us all types of the middle class, the Waulses and Featherstones, Tullivers and Rodsons, Poyzers, Bulstrodes, Vincys and Garths. She knows her professional class equally well as her numerous and skillfully drawn lawyers and doctors and clergymen prove. Nor is her knowledge of the landed class of Englishmen at all deficient as her Mallingers, Arrowpoints, Casses, Transornes, Chettarns, and Brookes bear testimony.

She presents the whole population of the district, all its

classes and all its types. She presents all the elements of a community's life, religious, social, political, industrial, or intellectual. She does this by the use of types. These representative figures are numerous enough to give a full view of society.

"Middlemarch" is her best example of the study of a town. The book takes as its title the name of the town and with good reason. It is the study of the town and the blighting influence which its provincial limitations exerted upon two of its people, Sydgate and Dorothea. So, a town can have more than individuality, it can have malign influence and do an evil deed.

There is no change in Middlemarch at the end any more

than there is in Rosamund. It remains conventional and materialistic. St. Oggs is petty and mean and evil minded, proper background for a Tom Tulliver and fit instrument to inflict the tortures of the inquisition upon Maggie.

These towns do not exhibit the lowest depths of poverty or degradation. Treby Magna is ignorant, mediocre, and sordid but it does not exhibit itself to Felix Holt as a field for his labors; Dorothea is dissatisfied because she can find no work to do in Lowick. Like so many of George Eliot's sinners, these towns are very respectable, and so blinded by their own materialism that they do not see their own sins. Milby however becomes

more tolerant and gains higher ideals under the influence and example of Mr. Tripan.

Twice does George Eliot leave her provincial life and turn cityward. The scene of "Romola" is in Florence, and a part of "Daniel Deronda" is laid in London. Her treatment of city life is not nearly so successful as her provincial life. Her picture is not as broad, not as full of detail, not as true.

It would be a hard task to make a picture of a city which would be equal in fullness, accuracy, and characterization to her pictures of provincial life. Dickens, well as he knew London, does not give us a picture of the city as a whole, but only of its substratum. Perhaps George Eliot, in her London, had no

intention of trying to make such a characteristic picture as she made of her villages.

In her treatment of Florence, however, it is evident that she does mean to make such a picture. We find all the elements in the city's life presented, artistic, social, industrial, political, religious. Such figures as the barber Nello, Bratti, Piero di Cosimo, Goro, Niccolò, Macchiavelli, Monna Brigida, are types and are introduced as such. Some of the leading actors are city types as well, - Lino, Dölfo Spini, Bernardo del Nero, contadina Tessa, the old scholar di Bardi.

But historical scholars tell us that her Florence of the fifteenth century is not a true historical picture. Despite the times and the events she treats,

despite the evident effort toward that end, the book does not seethe with the excitement or action of the times. There is beneath the attempted effervescence, the quiet, reflective, ethical calm of a George Eliot. Her Florence is not exceedingly unlike her English life. The reason for this is very evident; we find it in the overpowering ethical purpose which she was never for an instant able to get away from.

We do not know whether she aimed to give a tolerably detailed picture of London or not. Her lack of success augurs that she did not. She gives us a little glimpse of the life of Belgravia through Gwendolen's and Deronda's London life, a little of its artistic side in Mirah,

Hans Meyrick, and Klesmer, and the
 Jewish quarter in the Sapidoths
 and Cohens. She does not touch
 slum-life, probably because she
 feels herself incompetent here
 for we know what she thinks of
 the great ethical importance of
 this work from her words about
 the Oliver Twists and Jos and Nancy
 of Dickens: "And if Dickens had
 been able to give their psychological
 character, their conception of life,
 and their emotions, with the same
 truth as their idiom and manners,
 his books would be the greatest
 contribution to art ever made to the
 awakening of social sympathies".
 George Eliot never gives us a single
 character without portraying its
 inner life, its conception of life
 and its emotions.

Practically every figure in George Eliot's novels is a type. She gives us in this way a broad view of English life, a tolerably complete view of humanity. She works out her purpose in this way; every character stands for an idea and all are skillfully managed together to produce a result which teaches a moral lesson.

We note a similarity in her figures, leading and subordinate, which we can explain by this use of types. Although her characters are individuals and are differentiated, they will all divide into groups of similar figures or types. For example, Maggie and Dorothea are two distinct personalities, but they are of the same type; Tito Melena, Fernyn, Godfrey Cass, and Arthur Donnithorne are

not much alike, but they may be classed in one group.

She portrays in her characters two distinct groups, the selfish and the unselfish. These classes may be subdivided and we will find that the same individual may figure as a type in several subdivisions.

The thoroughly altruistic woman is represented in Dinah as the type and in the same class are Dorothea, Janet, Milly, Maggie, Mirah, and Romola. Dorothea and Maggie represent the intellectual, philanthropic young woman whom life denies opportunity for proper training and noble effort. Romola represents the developing altruist, Milly the altruist of home, Janet the noble nature fallen into sin but saved.

The selfish, petty woman

is represented by Gwendolen, Mrs. Transome, Esther, Rosamund, and Hetty. Mrs. Transome and Gwendolen represent the intellectual woman who is egoistic, while Hetty shows that ignorance can exhibit an equal amount of egoism. Gwendolen, Rosamund, and Hetty represent the same type but in three different classes of society. Mrs. Transome and Rosamund represent the egoist unsaved, Gwendolen and Esther the egoist saved by being converted into an altruist.

Altruism in men is represented in Mr. Tryan, Savonarola, Adam Bede, Caleb Garth, Sydgate, Felix Holt, Daniel Deronda. Adam Bede is the developing altruist, Adam and Bede are altruistic in the sphere of their own work,

Mr. Trian the altruist created by the transformation of an egoist, Sydgate the altruist frustrated by society, Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda successful altruists. Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda, in George Eliot's view, are ideal men in opposite classes of life.

Her types of masculine egoists include Mr. Casaubon, Jermin, Tom Tulliver, Grandcourt, Dempster, Stephen Guest, Arthur Donnithorne, Godfrey Cass, Dunstan Cass, Captain Wybrow, and Tito Melema. All of them are so wrapped up in self that they cannot see their own sins. All wreck lives. Not one of them is saved except Arthur Donnithorne and he is at the end of the story but a penitent. Mr. Trian is the example of the saved egoist but he occurs in her

story as an altruist. Stephen Guest, Captain Wybrow, and Arthur Donnithorne represent the weak-willed, self-indulgent type, Dempster and Grandcourt the tyrannical, brutal type. Tito Melena is the type of the entire class.

Two of these types George Eliot shows us again and again, the egoistic soul saved by becoming altruistic and its human agent of salvation. Strange to say, the erring soul is nearly always a woman and the rescuer a man.

George Eliot presents the ideal working man in three figures, Adam Bede, Caleb Garth, and Felix Holt. This type she drew from her own experience. Her father began life as a carpenter, and later became a land-agent.

He served as a partial original for both Adam and Caleb. Her sharp, kind-hearted, middle-class women are accounted for in the same way; Mrs Poyser and Mrs. Hackitt were drawn from her mother.

Mary Garth is a type. She is plain, sensible and strong, a helpful force to society. Anna Gascoigne serves as much the same type, less much of the strength. Anna and Lucy Deane represent clinging souls, dependent on affection for life.

George Eliot gives us numerous professional types. Her clergymen number legion and her doctors and lawyers are many. She gives us among these the same types as in general society. She paints the original and the conventional doctor, the

egoistic and the altruistic doctor.

She portrays the doctor or clergyman who serves mankind and thus helps the world by having lived, and the incapable or malignant type, both directly injurious to their fellows. She is particularly fond of the easy-going, tolerant clergyman who is not perhaps a zealot in his work but who has a heart sweet and kindly, and whose influence is beneficent as sunshine. Mr. Farebrother, Mr. Cilfil, and Mr. Irvine are the best examples of the type. In contrast we find an inefficient Amos Barton, a pedantic, cold hearted Causabon, or an energetic but bitter and bigoted Mr. Tyke. That she does not belittle dissenters, such types as Mr. Syon and Mr. Tryan testify.

George Eliot generally carries out her teaching by the method of contrasting types. Thus we have Dorothea and Rosamund contrasted, and Syzgate and Rosamund in "Middlemarch", Maggie and Tom Tulliver in "Mill on the Floss", Hetty and Elinah, Arthur Donnithorne and Adam Bede in "Adam Bede", Romola and Tito in "Romola", Gwendolen and Mirah, Gwendolen and Daniel Deronda, in "Daniel Deronda", Felix Holt and Harold Transome, Felix Holt and Johnson in "Felix Holt", Hempster and Mr. Tryan in "Janet's Repentance". She uses foils also to bring out a leading character. Anna is a foil for Gwendolen, Celia for Dorothea, Suey for Maggie, Tessa for Romola.

Her use of types does not interfere in the least with

the psychology or the art of George Eliot's books. Her types are not abstractions, the mere sign of an idea, but flesh-and-blood human beings. They are types, but they are individuals as well and as such are clearly defined and drawn in minute detail. She has the master touch, for every character, no matter how minor a one he may be, no matter if he appears but for one scene, is definitely characterized. Yet in this characterization, she never emphasizes one peculiar trait or habit until it becomes an exaggeration as does Dickens in his caricatures.

Sometimes her ethical teaching interferes in her character study but not often. Daniel Deronda is so thoroughly

the exponent of an ethical idea that he is not a flesh and blood human being. Felix Holt is rather rough and cross-grained, Daniel Deronda is refined and sensitive but Felix is a man while Daniel is almost an abstraction. Mirah also is very much of a shadow. We must admit that an author who can make her ethical purpose the raison d'être of every character and incident as George Eliot does, yet who fails but in two instances to create realistic characters, has accomplished the marvelous.

When her first novel appeared, it was thought by many people that George Eliot was a man. It was certainly a natural mistake, for she pictures men as if she were one herself. Dickens, however saw by her portrayal

of women that the writer was a woman. No man could understand women's inmost hearts and plead their case as she does.

Although the only ideal characters which she presents are men, she does not consider them in any whit the superior sex. The courtesan Ladislau is a will-o-the-wisp, Causabon is a parasite, Stephen Guest a weakling, Tom Tulliver a Pharisee, Arthur Donnithorne a dastard, Dempster a brute, Grandcourt a tyrant, and Tito Melena a degenerate. Despite her Rosamonds, her list of feminine sinners is not so ugly a one as this. Note, too, that to counterbalance the fact that all but one of her savers of souls are masculine, there stands this other fact, only one of her

many masculine egoists is saved to altruism.

George Eliot's pen draws people of all ages well. She is very successful in picturing children. Eppie, Aaron Winthrop, Totty Poyser, Sillo, Job Tudge are finely done and her child life of the little Tullivers is a masterpiece. Her delightful humor is here an invaluable gift.

Her chief characters are usually young, averaging between twenty and twenty-five years, but she portrays early youth also in Hetty, Tessa, Eppie, and Maggie. Her middle aged people are true to life and alive and are most numerous.

She has drawn a few old people. That they are drawn well old di Bardi, Squire Donnithorne,

Mr. Featherstone, old Mr. Transome, Mrs. Irvine, and Mrs. Bede give evidence.

In picturing good and evil people, George Eliot has gone to life itself for her models and as a result, has shown truth. She presents mixed characters, even as does life itself. Her gold is mixed with baser metals, her baser metals have some veins of gold. But that the one lump is gold, and the other baser metal, she makes evident. Dinah is her most perfect character, Grandcourt her most evil one. Both are realistic. She has presented to us but two paragons, Daniel Deronda and Mirah are perfect beyond the nature of flesh and blood. But she does not, on the other hand, paint the deep-dyed

villains of melodrama. Her evil-doers are natural and familiar to us as well, for they too come out of real life. They have the meanness of a Dunstan Cass, the brutality of a Dempster, or the love of ease of a Tito Melema. All are sunk in selfishness for that is what constitutes evil character to George Eliot.

Her character study shows that she possessed a power of analysis which is nothing short of the marvelous. She drew upon her own observation and experience in creating characters but her vision of society and life about her had extraordinary keenness of insight, and the material thus obtained by observation was worked over and acted upon by a mind of

profound depth and accumulated learning. She first analyzed the life before her, then analyzed her own impressions by means of her ethical views, and with a definite purpose, put together chosen elements to present to other minds her view of life and its meaning.

She uses the analytical method in presenting character. She analyzes the inner and outer life of every character and analyzes society itself as she presents her view of it.

Naturally, soul-life is of paramount importance to her. She cares for the deeds of her people as exhibiting and affecting character and as influencing others' lives, but her interest in the inner life

is far greater since the deeds are but the outward sign of the inner activity. She does not leave us to guess at this inner life through inferences from words or deeds, but tells us what her character is thinking or feeling, what phase of development he is passing through, what his spiritual condition is.

We are far more interested in her people themselves than in what happens to them. In Bulstrode's case, we are far less interested in his exposure and punishment by Middlemarch than in what is going on in Bulstrode's soul during the same time.

Deeds have in themselves a force which shapes character and lives. They create habits, start a

never ending chain of consequences which may be independent of the doer, react on character creating change and inevitably cause development. There are few stationary characters in George Eliot; development is the order of human life, she teaches. All of her characters are ascending or descending, - there is no dead level where one can stand still.

This is the very expression of George Eliot's belief about human life and the way she unites character study and problem. Society is composed of egoists and altruists; every human being is climbing step by step to higher levels, or sinking with motion at first gradual then accelerated, into the pit. Thus we see that her ethical teaching is the essence of her character study, that the character study is the very incarnation of her problem.

Section II: Problem.
Chapter I: Her Humanitarianism

Problem.

In order to understand the source of George Eliot's power, the reasons for her views, her choice of problem, and her purpose, it is necessary to know something of her life and work.

Marian Evans lived from 1819 till 1880. She spent all of her early life in the country she described. She attended girls' schools so knew whereof she spoke in discussing the education of women.

She was a student by nature, and became a scholar. She had studied French and German before she was sixteen. At that age, her mother died, and she became her father's housekeeper. During the six years following, she studied French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Italian

languages and literatures, and made a study of music. In 1841, her father moved to Coventry, where she formed a friendship with the Brays which was to be a strong influence upon her belief and life. As a result of their influence, she became acquainted with German thought in religion and philosophy. She went abroad with them, at her father's death, remaining for a time in Italy and Switzerland. During this time, she studied French and Mathematics.

Upon her return, after a period during which she lived with the Brays, she became assistant editor of the Westminster Review and made her home with the editor's family. She spent her leisure time in the study of Metaphysics. In 1854, she consented to a union with George

Henry Sewes, a scholar and writer, and lived with him until his death in 1878. They lived in Germany for a time, then settled in London, where their home was a salon for the celebrities in literature and science for many years. It was Mr. Sewes who first induced her to attempt fiction. She wrote all of her novels between 1856 and 1878. In the year of her death, 1880, she married Mr. Cross.

In her childhood and early youth, Marian Evans was intensely religious. That portion of "Mill on the Floss" which so vividly describes Maggie Tulliver's religious emotions is probably autobiographical. As a young girl, she was influenced strongly by an aunt whom she afterwards pictured as Dinah Morris and at this time her views became

Low Church. But as she passed out of her first youth, a change in belief gradually took place in her mind. Through the Brays, she met Mr. Hennel, a Unitarian minister, and his wife, and through the influence of this group of friends and the books which they introduced to her for study, a transformation in her views took place. She renounced the orthodox Christian faith and became a humanitarian. She made a serious study of works of German religious-philosophical thought, translating Strauss's "Leben Jesu", Feuerbach's "Das Wesen des Christenthums", and began the translation of Spinoza's Ethics. Throughout her mature life, her studies were largely in the field of philosophy; she assisted in the editing of a Radical magazine, the medium of expression

for positivist and scientific views; with Mr. Sewes she studied problems of social philosophy; among the habitués of her salon were Huxley, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer.

She never called herself by the name of Positivist but Compté's philosophy was pleasing to her, and she is usually identified with the Positivists.

She lived during the period of English history which made for tolerance. The Irish Church Act was passed and the Test Act repealed. Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, and John Stuart Mill were writing. Tolerance was assured not only for Quakers, Jews, and Catholics, but went farther, and was extended to agnostics. The age of freedom of thought had come. From the French philosopher, Compté,

through the English Mill, the humanitarian movement started and spread through England. George Eliot stands for the spirit of the age; she represents the trend of thought of the third quarter of the last century. It has been said that to know George Eliot is to know the nineteenth century.

George Eliot represents humanitarianism in fiction. As in her youth she had been earnest in her religion, so, later she put into humanitarianism the intensity of an earnest soul and made it her religion. It is natural, indeed it seems inevitable, that beliefs so strongly held, and by such a woman should shape and color her novels even though there was present no conscious desire to put into them a system of philosophy.

That she did have a desire to impress the cardinal principles of her belief, we may learn in her own words: "My books have for their main bearing a conception without which I could not have cared to write any representation of human life, namely, that the fellowship between man and man, which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man; and that the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence is the idea of a goodness entirely human, i. e. — an exaltation of the human".

It is not very surprising to find critics contradicting each other concerning George Eliot. A scholar in English literature assures us: "There is no rationalism

in George Eliot's novels." Abba Gould Woolson in her "George Eliot and Her Heroines" professes to find a "scientific atheism" insidiously hidden in her books, "deep in the structure of the work."

I would match the flat contradiction of these two statements by another contradiction: both critics are wrong, but, at the same time, both are right. George Eliot's own words which I have just quoted prove this to be true.

There is no rationalism as such in her novels; she makes no attack upon religion. The most devoutly orthodox may read without shrinking for he will find no covert or overt hostility. The would-be religious iconoclast may read but he will find no weapon which he can use in his

attack upon man's faith in God and Christ. So true is this, that a reader who does not think below the apparent surface of the story, does not realize the absence of teaching directly religious, but, if he is ignorant of George Eliot's life and creed, may interpret as religious what in reality is ethical teaching. For this reason, there is no harm and there is good for the youth in George Eliot's books. That George Eliot does not obtrude upon her readers the half of her creed denominated unbelief even Abba G. Woolson admits, but she chooses ungenerously to assign this forbearance to a mere mean desire for popularity. This is not consistent with what we know of George Eliot's sincere, earnest character. We would prefer to assign as a reason, her

tolerance toward those of a faith she does not hold, or the respect and sympathy which we are told she felt throughout her life for the religion she too had once held. Whatever the reason, the fact is true, in her novels she does not preach anti-supernaturalism, she does not even defend it.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward of our own day, is a notable opposite. "Robert Elsmere" and "David Grieve" are everything which George Eliot's are not in this respect. She boldly and deliberately makes of her books weapons to destroy, if possible, the faith which she flatly calls superstition. Her books sear the faith of the wavering; they may wreck the simple trust of a child and this danger in them is not made up for by a soul-stirring

ethical force. These novels wound cruelly, and they leave us fiercely resentful at the intolerance of her who tells us of our own intolerance. But George Eliot, who, in her own belief, went farther than Mrs. Ward, does not choose to make of her books sharp edged swords. The Atheist, the Calvinist, and the child may read and will not find hurt but healing, for she gives them a teaching which leads to nobler living, which, universally believed and practised, would make of earth a heaven. She chose from humanitarianism the better half, the ethical truth, and enforced it in her stories with depth and power. The ethical purpose dominated George Eliot; she felt the call to proclaim a universal law of life which must be obeyed, and her sympathy

for weak and struggling humanity drew her to lend a hand. Duty is the supreme business of man's life; man's duty is to forget self in helping others, - this was her message.

On the other hand, Abba Gould Woolson is right in a sense. We learn from George Eliot's own words that she meant to put into her books as their main bearing the proposition that man's salvation is dependent not upon "the conception of What Is Not Man," but upon "a goodness entirely human".

We can see in her own words how intimately connected in her own mind were the two halves of humanitarianism, - the rejection of faith in any power above the human, and the teaching that the end of man's life is to help man. "Heaven help us!"

said the old religion; the new one, from its very lack of that faith, will teach us all the more to help one another.

But Abba G. Woolson makes a mistake for she assumes that this denial of the superhuman is the main, ever-present element in her books. She accounts for the fact that her readers do not find it and that she herself is baffled in her heresy hunt by asserting invisibility, - "it will escape the notice of any but a close and thoughtful reader." The fact is that Abba Woolson cannot criticise fairly because she is unduly swayed by her disapproval of George Eliot's creed; she is unable to take the neutral ground of the critic outside his own beliefs that he may view dispassionately the work of another. Consequently she is wholly out of

sympathy with George Eliot and shows throughout her book a misunderstanding of her subject which is exasperating. Her book is an attack; but the notable fact is that she is really not attacking George Eliot, but humanitarianism under her name. This is not literary criticism. It is not the prerogative of the critic to find fault with George Eliot because she could not build her novels upon the faith which she renounced thirteen years before she wrote her first novel. We must take her and must consider her as she is. Blinded by her rankling memory of George Eliot's creed, she reads into George Eliot heresy which no one else can see, and fails to see what is there. She admits her moral purpose but dismisses it as "a subordinate enforcement of minor moralities" which as compared with her

efforts at proselyting is comparatively unimportant. She is unable to see that George Eliot is one of the greatest moral teachers the world has ever known among writers of fiction.

Then, if George Eliot does not preach anti-supernaturalism, how shall we reconcile this with the emphatic expression of her purpose in her own words? She preached that the forgetting of self in helping others is the means of man's spiritual salvation. That it is which marks the dead line between the saved and the lost; that it is which makes of a life a moral success, the perfection of highest development, or a miserable failure. This is all that she teaches; there is no religious attack, no proselyting. There is but one explanation of the seeming contradiction between her expressed purpose and

her work. She intended that her ethical teaching should inculcate the anti-supernatural one by inference. She would show to men in the novel so plainly that this ethical doctrine of altruism is the vital principle of life that they would see that this principle comprised the whole of religion, that "the idea of God ---- is the idea of a goodness purely human". The apotheosis of unselfishness was to purge the soul not only of sin but of superstition, to reveal to the reader the light of a saving ideal and the light of truth as well.

We can see that to George Eliot's mind, the teaching of the one half must inevitably mean the teaching of the other also; thus to her conception, she accomplished her purpose. But I think the great majority of her readers would say that she has

not succeeded. She depended too implicitly upon the feeling that this doctrine of altruism represented humanitarianism and would teach that cult. But George Eliot did not make allowance for the fact that this doctrine of hers which meant to her humanitarianism, is a vital element in the Christian religion. There is nothing new or strange in the doctrine that man's duty is to help others, and that this is a manifestation of love toward God.

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me - And the king shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye

have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me". [Matthew 26: 34-40, 40-45.]

"But I say unto you which hear - Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you." [Luke 7-30]

"Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again"

"Give and it shall be given unto you."

"Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then Jesus said unto him, Go and do thou likewise."

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise." [Luke 11-13]

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." [Luke 17-33]

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I

have loved you, that ye also love one another."

All that George Eliot teaches as ethical truth is familiar to us already as religious truth imparted by Christ as a vital part of his teaching. his very life was the incarnation of that teaching, for he spent his years of work in healing the sick of body and soul, and gave his life as a sacrifice. And so George Eliot's readers refuse to call the blessed old truth a new one, refuse to take it out of its place as a part of Christ's teaching and to make of it a weapon to destroy their belief in His divinity. Indeed to the great majority of her readers, to all save those who would dig down deep to find the whole purpose, the effect is the reiteration of a truth which we have acknowledged to be a law of God.

But, though we know this law, we forget. We yield to weakness and sin and we make our petty selves the centre of our universe. The saving truth cannot be preached too often to ears so dull. The man who can preach this truth with power to wake men's souls, I dare to assert is the instrument of God. And so, George Eliot has her part in the world's work.

George Eliot puts her purpose in life into the question: "What do we live for if not to make life less difficult to each other?" Her moral purpose creates her books, she writes in order that she may ask her readers this question, and that, by the asking, she may make life less difficult to them. Her

reason for choosing fiction as the medium can also be given in her own words:

"A picture of human life, such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves which may be called the raw material of sentiment."

To fulfill his part in life, and the end of his being, every man must have what she calls "the recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self which is to the moral life what the addition of a central ganglion is to to the animal life". She writes to create in us that "raw material of sentiment" by picturing to us human beings who are saved or lost according to their possession or lack of "that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self."

Chapter II : Main Problems.

In our first study of George Eliot, we seem to find four main problems worked out, four equal themes, altruism versus egoism, the saving of a soul, sin and its retribution, a sort of social philosophy which presents an ideal order of society. But on closer study, we discover that she has expressed her main theme in these four forms, that they are not separate but inwoven each with the other as part of the whole.

She shows us that altruism must conquer egoism in the individual before growth is possible, that if this conquest is not made, decay is inevitable. She has in her mind as she writes an ideal of sane society in which altruism shall be its feeling. She shows in her stories wherein the characters are faulty, measured by this ideal. Her method of presenting her teaching is usually

by the story of the saving or decay of a soul. The soul is saved by being brought out of blind egoism into the light of altruism. The means described to bring about this change upon the characters are frequently sin and retribution and repentance. But sometimes the method is to picture the decay of a soul and the retribution for sin is carried to the point of final, hopeless ruin.

Thus we see that her exaltation of altruism includes all the others, is the expression of her purpose and the foundation of all her novels. In every story she preaches in a concrete form the necessity of altruism.

In "Adam Bede" she pictured the contrast of egoism and altruism; egoism causes the catastrophe but altruism saves from final

destruction. Egoism is represented in Arthur Donnithorne and Hetty Sorrel; altruism in Dinah Morris. Egoism leads to sin; sin brings punishment which cannot be stayed, but this very punishment saves by destroying the egoism in the souls of the sinners. Hetty listens to Dinah and repents; Arthur Donnithorne's remorse and pity destroy his egoism forever. Adam Bede is developed by the tragedy and by Dinah's influence, until he exchanges his spirit of harsh denunciation for pity toward weakness.

In "Daniel Deronda", egoism is represented by Gwendolen; altruism by Daniel Deronda. Gwendolen passes out of egoism into altruism by long, gradual development. She beholds a new vision of life in the altruism of Deronda, is taught by her own

guilt and resulting pain to hate egoism, and, guided by Heronda, enters the higher life. Sapidoth and Grandcourt are types of egoism, Mirah and Mordecai of altruism.

In "Romola" Tito represents egoism, and Savonarola is the force which turns Romola to altruism. Egoism is allowed to run its course to the end and its inevitable ruin shown in the decay of Tito's soul. Romola is at first a mixture of the two in that she never cares much for self, but her sympathies are narrow, centered on her father and Tito alone. Savonarola denounces her narrowness and makes her altruism universal. Pain is again a means of development.

In Felix Holt, egoism is represented by Esther, the Transomes, and Germyn; altruism by Felix Holt and

Mr. Syon. The result of egoism in soul and life are shown in the bitter despair of Mrs. Transome. Esther, at first a pure egoist, is scourged and guided into altruism by Felix Holt. Felix shows her her own pettiness, and, like Gwendolen, she finds the ideal of the higher life in the life of the man she loves. She who once worshipped daintiness and taste refused the life at Transome Court and, instead, became the wife of a working man who chose to be poor that he might help others.

In "Silas Marner," the Casses represent egoism, Dolly Winthrop, altruism. Egoism makes Dunstan Cass a degenerate and, at last, a thief. Egoism causes Godfrey Cass to refuse to own his own child, and to leave her to be reared by a poor weaver. But egoism brings its own retribution. The day comes

when what he considered good luck, he feels as a curse. When he wished to acknowledge Eppie and take her home to a childless hearth, she turns from him to her foster father's love and humble life. The egoism of another alienates Silas Marner from his kind and threatens to destroy his soul. A false friend wins his betrothed and diverts suspicion from himself by accusing Silas of theft. The drawing of lots declares him guilty, and society, represented to him by the congregation of Lantern Yard, turns against him. He loses faith in God and man and becomes a recluse and a miser. But altruism reconciles him to society and saves him. Through a little child he regains his faith in humanity and sympathy with mankind. He forgets self in ministering to another.

The three stories of "Scenes from Clerical Life" have the altruistic basis. In "The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton",

Milly represents altruism, Amos Barton and the Countess, egoism. Milly stands for altruism in the home; a faithful, loving wife and mother, she gives her whole strength and at last, life itself to her family.

"Mr Gilfil's Love Story" is a tale of the havoc wrought by egoism. Captain Wybrow, a thorough egoist, while away monotonous hours by winning the love of a young girl. Catalina is of passionate Italian temperament, and her grief and rage at his desertion of her sap her vitality. Her heart turns at last to a worthier love, but happiness cannot restore to her the lost strength, and she dies.

In "Janet's Repentance,"

Dempster represents egoism, Mr. Tryan, altruism. Tryan, in his youth, was an egoist and wrecked the life of another by his egoism. Remorse made him renounce self and give his life to the service of others. Janet is by nature an altruist; the stress of her life with Dempster is too great and the wine-cup becomes her curse. Tryan, by his teaching and never-ceasing effort brings her up out of the darkness of sin and despair into the light. Through her knowledge of Mr. Tryan's past and his present, Janet gains courage for heroic effort. Thus, in Mr. Tryan, George Eliot would show us that a life once a curse through egoism, may, through altruism, become a blessing.

In "Middlemarch", Causabon and Rosamund represent egoism.

Sydgate and Dorothea, altruism. In this story is presented the ruin of a life full of glorious possibilities through the egoism of another. Sydgate's great dream of reform is made incapable of fulfillment through Rosamund's petty selfishness. Yet Sydgate is not turned into an egoist, for he gave his ideals and life as a sacrifice to another's egoism, not to his own. Dorothea's altruistic desires are incapable of rich fruition because of the stupid egoism of the society in which she was born. Mr. Brooke, Chettam, Celia, Mrs. Cadwallader, - there are a host of egoists incapable even of understanding that there is a vision of life higher than their own. So Dorothea, frustrated by society as Sydgate is by Rosamund, is unable to accomplish great things and

confines her altruism to the narrow round of home.

"Mill on the Floss" too is a tale of frustration. Maggie is a soul who yearns to expend herself in generous effort but stupid society, uniformly egoistic, denies her any opportunity. At last, hedged in and baffled in all effort to escape from her narrow prison, Maggie for the moment forgets her ideal in a dream of love, and goes on the river with Stephen Guest. But her egoism does not last long; she remembers Lucy, and, choosing bitter duty, returns to St. Ogg's. Society repays her sacrifice by calumny. We have again, as in *Middlemarch*, two types, Maggie on the one side, and on the other, her brother Tom, Maggie's opposite, an egoistic individual, and a type, as well, of egoistic society.

Thus we see that in all of George Eliot's books, altruism is the subject. We have the obverse and reverse; for the former, the triumph of altruism over egoism in the ascent of one soul, for the latter the frustration of the purposes of an altruistic soul by the egoism of society.

By the foregoing analysis, we see that George Eliot's favorite method of presenting her doctrine of altruism is by giving us the study of the saving of a soul. George Eliot has her own theory as to what constitutes the saving of a soul. Blind egoism, the state of a self-centered, petty soul without a vision of its own benightedness, represents to her the pit. To give this soul a realization of its own unworthiness, and a vision of the higher life, to bring it up out of the depths of egoism

to the heights of altruism is to save it. Or one naturally altruistic, may be overcome by something stronger than his own will, and led into sin. To strengthen this soul until it is able to live up to own ideal to save it. Gwendolen and Esther are types of the first, Janet of the second.

If we examine these studies in psychology, we find that religion is not used as a saving agency. Only in two instances does religion seem to play this part, in the case of Hetty and of Janet, but if we analyze these cases, we find that it is the human influence of Dinah and of Mr. Tryan which is the uplifting force. To be sure, Dinah and Mr. Tryan are the most religious of her characters, - Dinah a devout type of early Methodism, Mr. Tryan a clergyman of the slum-worker type;

and both use prayer and exhortation in their effort to save. Nevertheless, George Eliot makes it clear that it was the personal power of Dinah over Hetty, of Mr. Fryan over Janet, a power which came from human goodness and human sympathy which melted Hetty into penitent confession and which put courage into Janet to keep up her struggle. Savonarola too is a religious character, but it is his denunciation of immorality, and his preaching of duty towards fellow-men which takes hold of Ragnola. She is a pagan in the beginning; in the end, the crucifix given her by Savonarola is not to her an emblem of the atonement, but of bearing life's pain without thought of self and giving one's self for others.

It is the human hand, then, that lifts up according to George Eliot, - the fellowship between man and man, "the idea of a goodness purely human". In "Felix Holt", and "Daniel Deronda", this is especially noticeable. There is but one agency in the saving of Esther and that is Felix Holt. George Eliot says: "She cried bitterly. If she might have married Felix Holt, she could have been a good woman. She felt no trust that she could ever be good without him".

The hand to which Gwendolen clings in her struggle upward is a human one, - that of Deronda. Particularly significant are these words of George Eliot: "Would her remorse have maintained its power within her, or would she have felt absolved by secrecy,

if it had not been for that outer conscience which was made for her by Deronda? It is hard to say how much we could forgive ourselves if we were secure from judgment by another whose opinion is the breathing medium of all our joy; who brings to us, with close pressure and immediate sequence that judgment of the Invisible and Universal which self-flattery and the world's tolerance would easily melt and disperse. In this way our brother may be in the stead of God to us, and his opinion, which has pierced even to the joints and marrow, may be our virtue in the making.

George Eliot converts the soul to altruism through the manifestation of altruism by another.

The ability to help a soul in its struggle is the most important phase of altruism. But only a strong soul can do it, the character must be intensely possessed of a moral idea. Savonarola is a zealot whose whole soul is on fire to reform Florence; Dinah is a mystic possessed by her intense religious feeling; Mr. Ryan has lost all care for his own life in trying to help the poor and sinful; Felix Holt's one purpose in life is to be a moral force for the uplifting of his own class; Daniel Deronda will devote his life to endeavor for his own people, the Jews. Each is possessed by a great idea which exalts him above the station of ordinary men, and makes of him what we may call a moral genius. The individual who is uplifted

by such an agent, gets a new vision of life by coming in contact with a being who has lost all selfish desire in a great idea. The soul expands under this new view and the whole life is transformed by a new purpose. Notice the clinging dependence of these souls upon their guide.

Romola obeys Savonarola with the surety that he only can point out to her the path her feet should tread; Hetty in her hour of despair does not pray to God, but turns to Dinah with a feeling that she of all powers in heaven or earth can help; Esther and Gwendolen cling to their guides with despair in their own knowledge and will power, they exhibit a childlike helplessness and dependence, unable to take a step save by clinging to the loved hand; Janet makes of Mr. Tryan a

divine power to save her.

These in turn manifest altruism but in a humble way; they forget self in the service of those just above them. Gwendolen completes her renunciation of self when she sends the note to Deronda on his wedding day, and henceforth devotes her life to love and service for her mother and sisters. Esther renounces a fortune and marries Felix, to spend her life in service to him and to help him fulfill his life-plan; Janet becomes a blessing to the poor; Romola cares for Tessa and her children and helps the poor of Florence.

The only way, then, that one human being can save another is by living such a life that he can become an ideal to another and can inspire

that childlike faith and trust. Savonarola and Felix Holt are from the first, conscious, aggressive helpers. When Savonarola met Romola on the road out from Florence, she denied his right to stop her and denied the truth of his words. But, once convinced that he revealed duty to her, she looked to him for counsel. Felix deliberately and harshly attacked Esther's self-satisfaction, mercilessly held up before her the hateful image of herself as he saw her. The cure was painful but complete. Her higher nature was strong enough to win the day; she crushed her anger and was humble and grateful. Deronda's help was sought throughout. His was not an aggressive nature which could seek and denounce as Felix Holt did; he felt too much pity

for the sinner. Yet it was his criticism which gave her a new view of herself and a new vision of life. His criticism was not in the form of scathing words, but merely a look which he turned upon her as she stood at the gaming-table. Thereafter, Gwendolen turned to him as her "outer conscience" and entreated his teaching continuously. Mr. Tryan's help was sought in the first place by Janet, then she persisted in the effort to help and she to gain help. Mr. Irvine desired to be such a helper to Arthur Donnithorne, but, ignorant of the woeful need of help, did not force his efforts upon Arthur, and Arthur himself was not strong enough to ask the help which he really desired. So wreck resulted. With Mrs. Transome, there was no

human hand to help, so salvation was impossible.

But the helping hand alone cannot save. The soul must grow by its own activity. Struggle is the only road to the higher life. George Eliot believes in the redeeming power of pain. She takes her heroines through the fiery furnace. Pain strikes deep and makes the sufferer cry out for help; shakes off trivialities and makes the soul intense; drives the soul into that grim, unremitting effort which saves. But pain, egoistically borne can have no power to help.

"What passion seems more absurd when we have got outside it and looked at calamity as a collective risk than this amazed anguish that I, and not I know, He, or she should be just the smitten one?"

Pain results from two causes, the one outer; the other inner. Circumstances may hedge one in and society be unkind; Maggie, Adam Bede, and Romola are examples. Or pain may be the result of sin and in this form as retribution prove a saving force.

It is the fearful retribution which falls upon Hetty which drives her, under deepest disgrace and in the face of death, into repentance. Retribution here is complete, yet the soul is saved. Arthur Donnithorne, whose sin did not unduly trouble his conscience is shocked by the catastrophe into a horror of remorse which ruins his life. But this bitterness kills his self-love, henceforth he is lost in pity for another's fate. Janet, naturally a good

woman is driven by the hardship of her life as a drunkard's wife to the wine cup. Dempster's cruelty and her own shame and despair are her retribution. But this shame and despair drive her to Mr. Tryan for guidance and give her the courage to fight her battle with temptation.

Gwendolen, knowing the claims of another, sins in marrying Grandcourt. From the very moment on her wedding night when she received the poisoned diamonds, she suffered bitter remorse. Another phase of her retribution is Grandcourt's tyranny. This drives her into maddening hatred and at last brings the climax of her guilt when she withholds the rope which might have saved her husband from drowning.

and thus to her conscience, becomes guilty of murder. But her fierce remorse scourges her into horror of herself, and, clinging to Heronda's guiding hand, she climbs the upward path.

So long as retribution takes the form of pain, it cannot destroy. Decay of the soul is the only destruction. Heronda says to

Gwendolen in her hour of agony:

"I believe that you may become worthier than you have ever yet been - worthy to lead a life that may be a blessing. No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from."

"That is the bitterest of all - to wear the yoke of our own wrong doing. But if you submitted

to that as men submit to maiming or a life-long incurable disease, and made the unalterable wrong a reason for more effort toward a good that may do something to counterbalance the evil. One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled."

Yet, though George Eliot shows us that sin need not destroy any life, that repentance and a struggle to live a better life, will save, sin is none the less hateful to her. Sin is a disease to her, it must be cured or it will kill. Egoism may be passive,

but sin is active and consists in injuring others. Sin is egoism turned rabid.

The egoistic spirit is the necessary antecedent of sin. If an altruist sins, his altruism is for the time lost. Maggie is egoistic when she elopes with Stephen Guest but her altruism reasserts itself when she returns for Lucy's sake.

The Nemesis of the Greeks reappears in George Eliot's books. Dunstan Cass, Dempster, Godwin Cass, Captain Wybrow, Mrs. Transome, Germyn, Bulstrode, all by their own deeds let loose the Furies which are to pursue them. Retribution is sure for sin brings with itself punishment. The egoist sins; each sin leads to a worse. There comes after a while a

spiritual paralysis when there can be no revealing of the soul's own corruption, no vision of the higher life. "Eyes have they but they see not." The character sinks to a lower and lower plane. The soul degenerates and ends in decay. With Puritan inexorableness, she preaches that - "The wages of sin are death". The lost soul to her is the one which is buried in its supreme selfishness, dead to any call from another soul, become a curse to others through sin. The type is Tito Melena. He is at the first happy and harmless, but his Greek joy in life speedily turns into egoism and he disobeys the command of duty, turning to his own selfish pleasure. From the moment of yielding to his first temptation to abandon

Baldassarre, on through his selling of the di Bardi library, his deceiving of Tessa, his denial of his foster father, his treachery to his party, until his death by the hand of Baldassarre, he is a study of decay. He is the lost soul.

George Eliot's whole scheme of ethical teaching might be comprehended under the term of her "social philosophy." Ideal society is that founded on morality and truth. Morality, of course, is practically synonymous with altruism to her. The essential nature of sin is injury towards fellow-men; to save a soul is to bring it to the point where it becomes a blessing to society.

But a soul that needs to be turned about and started on an upward path is not always a

soul that has sinned. Romola had not sinned; she was altruistic from the first but her altruism was narrow, being centered on her father. Had she accomplished her purpose of going to Venice, there to earn her bread by means of her learning, she might even have become an egoist in that she endured her own pain without trying to alleviate that of others. But Savonarola showed her her duty to society and made her narrow altruism universal.

A soul that has lost its fellowship with mankind sins against society. Silas Marner has become a recluse and practically a misanthropist. The problem is to remedy this condition and restore him to fellowship with his kind. His heart had becom

closed to mankind through men's injustice, therefore the means for his salvation must be unusual. His interest, once in religion, is now centered on his gold; the loss of his hoard leaves him broken and groping. But—"A little child shall lead them".

Eppie appears in her helplessness, and in loving service to helplessness, and in loving service to her, he regains fellowship with mankind.

George Eliot is not overbalanced by her ethics. She loves the truth as well as morality, and her ideal society must be sane as well as moral. Felix Holt's caustic criticism of Byron shows us how she hated morbidness. In fact most of her leading characters are at fault in the light of her social ideal, if not

on the moral side, then in this sane and sound view of life.

Several of them are blind to the value of some of life's elevating forces. Here belong those who cannot appreciate art or see its mission. Celia wondered why people sang, for they looked so absurd when they opened their mouths in that ridiculous way. Sydgate listens to music like an emotional elephant. Dorothea fails here. She has a void where artistic feeling should be, her intense morality fills her whole soul to the exclusion of everything else. She cannot understand art. "When I examine the pictures one by one the life goes out of them, or else something is violent and strange to me"

"It is painful to be told that anything is very fine and not to be able to feel that it is fine - something like being blind, while people talk of the sky." The expense of art does much to spoil it for her. The pictures at Tipton Grange give her pain because the money should have been spent on cottages. Rome is strange and painful to her. Her moral bias spoils art for her and makes her unable to see that it is a force to better mankind.

Gwendolen and Klesmer again represent the artist and the Philistine. Klesmer feels art as a religion; Gwendolen turns to the stage egoistically as a means of providing her a living and of gratifying her vanity by display and admiration.

As Mrs. Grandcourt, she gives up her music because she realizes her mediocrity. Daniel feels the value of caring for art for its developing power. "I take what you said of music for a small example. - - - - - you will not cultivate it for the sake of a private joy in it. What sort of earth or heaven would hold any spiritual wealth in it for souls pauperized by inaction?"

Sydney, altruistic as he is in his great reformatory ideas, has his egoistic side. George Eliot is continually showing us his "common spots" comprised in certain false ideas. He was proud of the fact that though only a Middlemarch doctor, he was of good birth. He could not conceive himself beginning housekeeping without plenty of good plate and the best

furniture. Of Dorothea, he said, "She's a good creature - that fine girl - but a little too earnest", and chose a Rosamond.

She presents to us in every novel two contrasted types, - the materialist and the idealist. Both are at fault. The materialist represents common sense, but a common sense without ideals and earth bound. One example is the prosaic Celia, narrow and self-satisfied, with her puzzled impatience for "Dodo's notions." The materialist is blind to the idealist's vision; he views him with censorious contempt or impatience; he thwarts him or drives him to ruin. Such a one is Rosamond, such a one, Tom Tulliver. The idealist, on the other hand, is in danger of becoming

a mere dreamer, unable to see the value of the common-places, incapable of forcing a way to make his dream a reality.

Her idealists are always disappointing us by falling below what we expect of them, by meagre accomplishment or even by wrong-doing. Dorothea's two marriages are both unworthy of her and she never finds a work great enough for her ability; Dinah narrows her wide helpfulness to her own home; Sydgate is not strong enough to overcome Rosamond's paralyzing influence; Maggie elopes with Stephen Guest.

However, society itself is generally to blame for the complete or partial failure of her idealists. Society is materialistic; food, drink,

raiment, and the gathering into
 bars occupy its attention. It is
 stupidly blind to the idealists
 vision and gives no sympathy
 to the soul which passes beyond
 the limits of conventionality. It
 goes farther; it thwarts the original
 soul, renders null every aspiring
 effort, and drives it down to that
 despair which makes the baffled
 soul apathetic in a lower life or
 which scourges it on to ruin.
 Then society views its own havoc
 and censures its victim. Society
 can present to Gwendolen no higher
 ideal than wealth and social
 position; it drives her, threatened
 with social ostracism in the
 rank of poor governess, to an evil
 marriage. But society smiles upon
 this marriage and, because of it,
 considers her a favorite of fortune.

But society's golden apples of Sodom turn to ashes. In the dark hour of her punishment, there is only one human being in her world who can point her to the light. When, at last, she returns to her mother and sisters at Offendene, a saved and chastened soul, society loses interest in her.

Society can give to Esther no higher ideal than that of taste; there exists in it but one man — one who scorns society's dicta — who can open her blinded eyes. Society approved of her as the heiress of Transome Court, it wondered, then speedily forgot her, when she married a poor working-man.

Society was unable to
 ✓ unable to understand Lydgate's dreams of reform; his deviation

from the conventional caused him to be dubbed a charlatan, roused jealousy and enmity in his stupid professional brethren, and finally worked his ruin in Middlemarch by stamping him as Bulstrode's willing tool and accomplice in crime. But doubtless society approved of him when Rosamond ruined his life and made him a mere money-getter at Bath.

Dorothea has high ideals; society gives her no opportunity to realize them; her soul is open to great ideas but society forbids them to enter; her heart yearns to help mankind; society thwarts her. She is blindly misunderstood and opposed on every side by such representatives of society as Mr. Brooke, Chettam,

Celia, Mrs. Cadwallader, and Causabon. She reaches out groping hands; - they find but a blank wall. She is "heaven's consummate cup" but the sacred wine is denied.

The book which arraigns society most severely is "Mill on the Floss". Like Dorothea, Maggie has moral genius, but society cannot give her the materials from which she could create a masterpiece. Maggie was not moulded in the conventional form and her world could never approve of her. In her childhood, she ran away to the gypsies because she felt so keenly her mother's disapproval; her brother Tom was perpetually blaming and punishing her; at last, when she renounced Stephen Guest and returned home for Lucy's sake, society made of her a social outcast.

George Eliot gives us plainly to understand that it was of her return far more than of her going that society disapproved, yet the going was the selfish act and her return a heroic one. But her punishment for self-conquest is so severe that we are almost glad when she finds peace in the waters of the freshet. The book is a bitter denunciation of society's uncharitable judgments which she proves to be the censure of the Pharisees.

She presents the struggle of the individual with society, not for the psychological value of the struggle or for the mere interest of the story but for the ethical conclusion. The individual is always beaten in his struggle with society; George

Eliot shows us that this defeat is inevitable. By this very stern arraignment of society, then, represented in such types as Tom Tulliver and Rosamond Vincy, she puts before us the ideal. Under ideal conditions, the individual and society would be in perfect harmony and of mutual help. Society would not shake off the bonds of common sense but be sane and sound in its outlook; it would be exalted above the trivial, moved by great ideas, with eyes for the idealist's vision. In short, altruism would prevail in the individual and society.

Chapter III; Other Problems.

George Eliot treats within the limits of her main theme many minor ones, but in all the treatment is based on her ethical teaching. Chief of her subjects is woman. She is vitally interested in this subject and treats it in every novel. She has written two novels, "Middlemarch" and "Mill on the Floss" in which it is the chief subject.

Her treatment turns on woman's opportunities in life. In the two novels which treat of the defeat of the individual by society, the victims are women. The reason for this is evident. Society builds its wall of limitations more closely about women than men. She is denied proper education. The intellectual woman mentally starves for the education

which is wasted on her stupid brother. Brilliant Maggie longs to devour Tom's Latin grammar while Tom yearns for the day when he can throw it away and forget the little Latin he has learned. Nature made the disastrous mistake of giving brains and talent to the sister, - the education which was forced upon dull, tortured Tom would have borne rich fruitage in her.

George Eliot's heroines are subject to the limitations of the times, and are dependent upon the select seminary for young ladies for what it would be an absurdity to call education since it has about the same value as mental food as a box of bonbons would have as contrasted with a wholesome meal. All suffer life-injuries.

Maggie's limitations in education ruined her life; Dorothea's education which George Eliot compares to "the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse", renders her unable to open the doors of opportunity to the work for which Nature fitted her; Esther's school-life was responsible for her false veneer of triviality and pride; Gwendolen's faults came largely from insufficient and misguided education; even Rosamond must not bear all the blame for her shallowness and selfishness, for it was through Mrs. Lemon's fashionable school that she acquired her unlovely view of life.

When the young ladies' seminary has done its part toward maiming or paralyzing

these young souls, society finishes the sinister work. They are given no room for development, no rich soil or sunshine in which to grow and blossom. Dorothea can see no opportunity for a wider helpfulness in her life except to marry a petrified pedant who fastens himself as a parasite upon her young life. When we add to this the hardness,

narrowness and stupidity of the society which again exerted its benumbing influence upon her at Mr. Causabon's death, we can put no blame upon her in her disappointing second marriage. Mr. Causabon by his dastardly will forced the issue; her relatives helped the work of the dead hand by unjust censure of Ladislaw; life had denied her

all opportunity of generous labor; she was not to blame when she took the offered gift of love.

George Eliot says: "Certainly these determining acts of her life were not ideally beautiful. They were the mixed result of young and noble impulse struggling amidst the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which great feelings will often take the aspect of error and great faith the aspect of illusion. For there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it. A new Theresa will hardly have the opportunity of reforming a conventual life, any more than a new Antigone will spend her heroic piety in daring all for the sake of a brother's burial:

the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is forever gone. But we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas, some of which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know."

Maggie, too, is denied chance for development and activity. Tom, blinded by egotism, values his mediocre self above his keen-brained great-souled sister; he bids her with the piteous, tender sympathy sit with folded hands in the wreck of the family fortunes. The Mill and Tom, — what could a Maggie do against powers like these? Waldstein says: "It is a wonderful touch of artistic suggestion that she and

her brother are finally submerged in the Mill, carried away by the Flood. This novel reflects more thoroughly the spirit of Greek tragedy than any other work of modern fiction. The Mill and the part it plays in the life of the Tulliver family and in Maggie's sorrows are like great Fate in the Greek tragedy. It is an embodiment of the hard and unreliable tyranny of the powers that are." It is women especially who are subject to this tyranny of the powers that are.

According to George Eliot, it is the narrow lives of women which cause their temptations. A Rosamond, so scrupulously careful in her conduct, so sure of her own perfection, seeks to enliven the monotony of her

life by attempting to enslave
 Zadislaw; Maggie starves so long
 in the desert that when forbidden
 fruit is offered, her empty hands
 snatch at it before they put it
 aside.

George Eliot's treatment of
 women is at bottom strictly
 ethical. Women have not the
 broad strengthening education
 which should fit them to
 endure the hardships and
 temptations of life unfalteringly;
 their narrow lives are fraught
 with the peril of egoism; egoistic
 society about them gently seduces
 to an egoistic life; only struggle
 can save them.

Gwendolen says: "We
 women can't go in search of
 adventures - to find out the
 Northwest Passage or the source of

the Nile, or to hunt tigers in the East. We must stay where we grow or where the gardeners like to transplant us. We are brought up like the flowers to look as pretty as we can and be dull without complaining. That is my notion about the plants; they are often bored, and that is the reason why some of them have got poisonous".

Harold Transome sums up precisely society's views concerning the inconsequence of women. He says to his mother: "It is very natural that you should think in this way. Women, very properly don't change their views but keep to the notions in which they have been brought up. It doesn't signify what they think-

they are not called upon to think or to act." Lawyer Wakem sums this up more tersely when he says, "We don't ask what a woman does - we ask whom she belongs to"

Mrs. Transome voices the despair of her sex in her bitter words: "What is the use of a woman's will? - if she tries, she doesn't get it, and she ceases to be loved. God was cruel when he made women." Add to this her own still more bitter cry, "I would not lose the misery of being a woman, now I see what can be the baseness of a man".

George Eliot's two themes - woman and the harm wrought by society - are very frequently united. The best examples of this are found in "Daniel Deronda", "Mill on the Floss" and "Middlemarch".

In the introduction of "Middlemarch" she states the meaning of the story and gives an epitome of her belief on these two subjects. "Many Theresas have been born who found for themselves no epic life, wherein there was a constant unfolding of far resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur, ill matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure, which found no sacred poet, and sank unwept into oblivion. With dim lights and tangled circumstance they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but after all, to common eyes their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these laterborn Theresas were

helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul. Their ardor alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of womanhood; so that the one was disapproved as extravagance and the other condemned as a lapse.

Some have felt that these blundering lives are due to the inconvenient indefiniteness with which the Supreme Power has fashioned the natures of women: if there were one level of feminine incompetence, as strict as the ability to count three, and no more, the social lot of women might be treated with scientific certitude. Meanwhile the indefiniteness remains, and the limits of variation are really

much wider than anyone would imagine from the sameness of women's coiffure, and the favorite love-stories in prose and verse. Here and there a cygnet is reared uneasily among the ducklings in their own pond, and never finds the living stream in fellowship with its own oary-footed kind. Here and there is born a St. Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off, and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centering in some long recognizable deed."

It is perhaps owing to her belief that society so often makes women its victims, that, in her stories of the saving of a soul,

the erring soul is so often a woman and the saving agent a man. It is so with Felix Holt, Savonarola, Mr. Tryan, and Daniel Deronda. Unless we consider that Dinah saves Adam Bede or Nancy, Godfrey Cass, there is no case where a woman saves a man. Yet George Eliot is an advocate for her sex. We can only explain this on two conjectures. She was better acquainted with the hindrances and temptations of women; it was their cause she wished to plead and she pled it by showing what would excite pity and a desire to help. Men, by their broader opportunities in education and life are more open to a great idea and more likely to find one. Felix Holt's

keen brain could see a purpose in life in helping his class, Daniel Deronda, in helping his people. A woman could not have taken Savonarola's place. Only philanthropic work is open, and that was not given to Dorothea for the poor were not near her door. Only in Elinah do we see a great idea at work on a woman's soul, and her preaching is finally stopped by Conference.

Yet, though George Eliot's ideal successes are men, she does not give the male sex precedence in brains or morality. Her weak brothers outnumber their feminine counterparts. Nor do they toil the rocky road that leads to perfection as do the Gwendolens and Esthers. Two are saved but at what a price! Ladislau at last attains full stature

of manhood but he does it at the expense of Dorothea's highest success; Arthur Donnithorne is saved but through the retribution for the tragedy he caused. The greater number, - the Germyns, Dempsters, Grandcourts and Titos, die in their sins. Perhaps it is because their opportunity is so much greater than a woman's that their failure is so much the more degrading. There is but one woman lost and that is the conventional Rosamond, buried in her own selfishness, who, after accomplishing the ruin of poor Sydgate, ends her days as a rich doctor's wife.

Marriage is a theme which George Eliot treats in detail. It is a powerful influence upon the lives of her men and

women; it has tremendous power to make or mar lives and character. She treats this problem fully in "Middlemarch", "Romola", "Felix Holt", and "Daniel Deronda".

George Eliot proclaims to us in stern tones what a profoundly important and serious subject this is, what an awful thing, a marriage which is a failure. She gives us many a miserable record. How many of her heroines have made shipwreck of their happiness on this rock, — Dorothea with Mr. Casaubon, Janet with Dempster, Romola with Tito, Gwendolen with Grandcourt.

But in Lydgate's marriage she shows us as vividly the baleful influence a wife can exercise over a husband. Rosamond

is truly poor Sydgate's basil plant. Says Felix Holt:
 "I can't bear to see you going the way of the foolish women who spoil men's lives. Men can't help loving them, and so they make themselves slaves to the petty desires of the petty creatures. That's the way those who might do better spend their lives for naught - get checked in every great effort - toil with brain and limb for things that have no more to do with a manly life than tarts and confectionary. That's what makes women a curse; all life is stunted to suit their littleness."
 Felix announces his determination never to marry because he feared the blighting influence of marriage upon fulfillment of his life's ideals: "I'll never

look back and say, - 'I had a fine purpose once - I meant to keep my hands clean, and my soul upright, and to look truth in the face; but pray excuse me, I have a wife and children - I must lie and simper a little, else they'll starve, or 'my wife is nice, she must have her bread well buttered and her feelings will be hurt if she is not thought genteel'."

It has been conjectured that the reason George Eliot treats so fully and so sternly of failures in marriage is the autobiographical one. Her union with Sewes was severely criticized, and her life and thought was to a certain extent, inevitably affected by this denunciation. She showed to the world in return, the other side of the picture, - the marriages

which wreck lives and ruin men and women of great possibilities, marriages which are degrading and criminal, yet which the world sanctions.

This view may be true but there is another explanation whose truth cannot be questioned. As a thoughtful woman, she realized fully the power of marriage as a life-influence upon men and women, - her great subject is the making or marring of human souls; it was inevitable that she should study marriage and treat it in her novels. This is particularly true since one of her chief themes is woman. She realizes fully the profound importance of this subject in the lives of women.

It was of more importance in George Eliot's day even than in these days of the college-bred, professional women, and the many respected spinster bread-winners.

George Eliot was not a woman who did not believe in marriage. It has been asserted that her reason for marrying Mr. Cross, in the last year of her life, was that she might show to the world her respect for the institution of marriage. However that may be, she has given the fair as well as the black side. She has given us her view of what marriages should be in the presentation of several unions which are to her ideal marriages. Such is the marriage of Esther and Felix

Holt, of Adam Bede and Dinah, of Mirah and Daniel Deronda. Here we have presented love, but we have as well equality in intellect, sensibility, morality, perfect understanding and congeniality, and a mutual purpose in life. Her basis is as usual ethical. Each is able to help the other to live the higher life.

She gives us also the example of the saving marriage in that of Fred Vinny and of Ladislaw. These marriages are far from ideal. Dorothea descends to a lower plane of life when she marries Ladislaw but she lifts Ladislaw to a higher one.

We see blind destiny at work here for a marriage between

Dorothea and Sydgate would have been the ideal one. But they meet too late, and part unconscious of having missed the chance for fulfillment of the life purpose of each in this marriage.

Sydgate has a glimpse of it when he says: "This young creature has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. - - - She seems to have what I never saw in any woman before - a fountain of friendship towards men - a man can make a friend of her. - - - I wonder if she could have any other sort of passion for a man. - - - Well, her love might help a man more than her money."

Mary Garth's marriage gives us a positive lesson. The ideal marriage is here in plain sight. Mary and Mr. Farebrother

are perfectly suited to each other and both desire the union. But both renounce it for the sake of another. Mr. Farebrother makes a life-sacrifice of his happiness on the altar of altruism. Mary turns from the union which would satisfy her nature in every way, to marry poor weak Fred and make a man of him. The marriage is a helpful one. Mary's life-work is a noble one; by sacrificing her preference, she saves a soul; Mr. Farebrother, though he loses his life's joy, gains in nobility of soul by his renunciation. Fred, to be sure, gratified his selfishness by accepting the sacrifice, but, on the other hand, it meant his salvation, it meant taking his only chance for living the better life.

But George Eliot does not leave love out of her ethics in the marriage question. In her saving marriages, it is present, and it is the basis of her ideal marriages. She does not place love highest, however. Love alone, she would teach, cannot make a happy marriage; the unions of Romola and Janet give ample proof of this. Both husband and wife must live a high moral life, must have a heart full of love for mankind, else the narrower individual love will fail to avert wreck, as in Janet's case, or will kill marital love as in Romola's. But a marriage without love is sin and desecration, and becomes a horror. Such is Gwendolen's.

"Mill on the Floss" is the novel which has love as its distinctive problem. Into a rich nature like Maggie's, whose life has been denied all color, love may come as a temptation to egoism. Love may be the blossoming of such a soul, but there is danger that the bloom be poisonous. Maggie is a second Lady of Shalott. A cruel fate has doomed her to spend her life in the narrow confines of an enchanted tower, weaving her never-ending web; the beauty of life she may never look upon but she is unceasingly tantalized by her vision of it in a mirror. At last, Sir Lancelot rides by and, forgetting the spell upon her, she throws wide the windows of her tower and looks. But

love is her curse, the spell is accomplished, the web flies wide and enmeshes the hapless Lady of Shalott.

In this book George Eliot treats a new problem, what might be called "the claim of passion". She would lead the reader to question whether Maggie was right in her decision to return to St Ogg's for the sake of Lucy and Philip, whether she had not reached the point where her duty to herself and her love was greater. The question with George Eliot is whether special circumstances in an individual lot may not make it permissible and even obligatory to set aside a rule which is usually held binding as a moral law. She expresses this clearly and

plainly,—"The great problem of the shifting relation between passion and duty is clear to no man who is capable of apprehending it; the question whether the moment has come in which a man has fallen below the possibility of a renunciation that will carry any efficiency, and must accept the sway of a passion against which he had struggled as a trespass, is one for which we have no master-key that will fit all cases. The casuists have become a byword of reproach; but their perverted spirit of minute discrimination was the shadow of a truth to which eyes and hearts are too often fatally sealed—the truth, that moral

judgments must remain false and hollow unless they are checked and enlightened by a perpetual reference to the special circumstances that mark the individual lot."

There is a dark page in George Eliot's history which her most ardent admirer cannot overlook or excuse, which inspires in the most enthusiastic disciple of her ethical teaching, censure and deep regret. We puzzle in vain to understand how she, the apostle of duty and right and self-sacrifice, could seem to forget and to defy her own ethical teaching by her union with George Henry Sewes. I think we have her explanation to the world in "Mill on the Floss" — her defense

of herself, her bitter denunciation of society for its censure. Note the paragraph which follows the one last quoted: "All men of broad, strong sense have an instinctive repugnance to men of maxims; because such people early discern that the mysterious complexity of our life is not to be embraced by maxims, and that to lace ourselves up in formulas of that sort is to repress all the divine promptings and inspirations that spring from growing insight and sympathy. And the man of maxims is the popular representative of minds that are guided in their moral judgments solely by general rules, thinking that these will lead them to

justice by a ready-made patent method, without the trouble of exerting patience, discrimination, impartiality - without any care to assure themselves whether they have the insight that comes from a hardly earned estimate of temptation or from a life varied and intense enough to have created a wide fellow-feeling with all that is human.

The story by which she enforces this teaching can be briefly told. Maggie is betrothed to Philip Wakem who is brilliant in mind but deformed in body; she loves and is loved by Stephen Guest who is practically pledged to Maggie's loved cousin Lucy. Maggie disobeys her conscience by going on the river with Stephen Guest.

She is lost for hours in a sort of dream in which her keen perceptions are befogged. Rousing at last, she finds that Stephen has allowed the boat to drift so far that the return will take hours. Stephen pleads with her to go on to Scotland where they will be married. When he uses his own suffering as a plea, Maggie submits. But before they reach the river port, Maggie knows she must go back for the sake of Philip and Lucy. She escapes after an agonized scene with Stephen, and returns to St. Ogg's. Society promptly ostracizes her and treats her with utmost contumely. Her brother Tom, who is the type of this society, - hard hearted, egotistical, blind, keen to punish, - casts her off. With such a case as this, George Eliot in "Daniel Deronda"

contrasts such a marriage as Gwendolen's. Yet society scourges Maggie and smiles upon Gwendolen's act.

George Eliot pronounces society the Pharisee and her denunciation is scathing. Maggie's words to Tom express some of George Eliot's censure of society: "Don't suppose that I think you are right, Tom, or that I bow to your will. You have been reproaching other people all your life, - you have always been sure you yourself are right; it is because you have not a mind large enough to see that there is anything better than your own conduct and your own petty aims." - - - "I don't want to defend myself. I know I have been wrong often, continually. But yet, sometimes when I have done wrong, it has been because

I have feelings that you would be the better for, if you had them. If you were in fault ever - if you had done anything very wrong, I should be sorry for the pain it brought you; I should not want punishment to be heaped upon you. But you have always enjoyed punishing me. - - - You have no pity; you have no sense of your own imperfections and your own sins. It is a sin to be hard; it is not fitting for a mortal - for a Christian. You are nothing but a Pharisee. You thank God for nothing but your own virtues - you think they are great enough to win you everything else. You have not even a vision of feelings by the side of which your shining virtues are mere darkness"

Not even in a novel can George Eliot convert St. Ogg's to a vision of its own blindness and sin in judgment, but she does shock Lucy and Tom into a perception of the truth. Sweet, gentle Lucy is incapable of such a sacrifice as that which Maggie made. "Lucy," said Maggie with another great effort, "I pray to God continually that I may never be the cause of sorrow to you anymore." "Maggie," she said in a low voice that had the solemnity of a confession in it, "you are better than I am".

Not till in the very hour of death, does Tom realize his blindness and fault. "It was not till Tom had pushed off, and they were on the wide water, - he face to face with Maggie, - that

the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force—was such a new revelation to his spirit of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision which he had fancied so keen and clear, that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other: Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary beaten face—Tom pale with a certain awe and humiliation. — — — But at last a mist gathered over the blue-gray eyes and the lips found a word they could utter: the old childish "Maggie!" — "In their death they were not divided?"

The whole book is a plea for charity of judgment. The

author hereby advocates one of the tenets of her social philosophy - ideal society must exercise charity of thought as well as of deeds. She carries the idea still farther, - she would even exercise charity toward what is reprehensible.

Daniel Deronda, Tom Tulliver's opposite, is the type in which she embodies this teaching. "As soon as he took up any antagonism, though only in thought, he seemed to himself like the Sabine warriors in the memorable story - with nothing to meet his spear but flesh of his flesh, and objects that he loved. His imagination had so worked itself to the habit of seeing things as they probably appeared to others, that a strong partizanship unless it were against an

immediate oppression had become an insincerity to him. His plentiful, flexible sympathy had ended by falling into one current with that reflective analysis which tends to neutralize sympathy. Few men were able to keep themselves clearer of vices than he; yet he hated vices mildly, being used to think of them less in the abstract than as a part of mixed human natures having an individual history, which it was the bent of his mind to trace with understanding and pity.

Intimately connected with George Eliot's plea for charity, is her treatment of emotion. There is little or none of the "Sturm und Drang" element in George Eliot, but she insists

as strenuously as those of that school upon the importance of sensibility in the character. That sympathy of which she speaks in the quoted description of Daniel Deronda is absolutely essential to the perfect soul. No beauty of soul or life is possible without it. It is the first essential of altruism. Pity, sympathy, tenderness are elements and the manifestation of love, and without love for mankind, no soul can help mankind.

It is this quality which makes the tender beauty of George Eliot's heroines, of a Maggie, a Dinah, a Dorothea. "Maggie was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her"

"When Maggie was not angry, she was as dependent on kind or cold words as a daisy on the sunshine or the cloud: the need of being loved would always subdue her as in old days it subdued her in the worm-eaten attic."

Dorothea, with her ardent, sympathetic nature, her sweetness, her caresses, is the very impersonation of this spirit of love toward fellow-men.

Gwendolen and Esther have not this sweetness at first though it is not absolutely lacking. Gwendolen loves her mother, Esther, her foster-father. The wider sympathy has to be developed in them through love of one; thus we see why in these cases, the man each loves is an ideal.

Felix Holt, despite his keen vision of their faults, has this deep feeling for his fellow-men "The other thing that's got into my mind like a splinter - - - is the life of the miserable - the spawning life of vice and hunger." "It ought to do him good - - - If he knows it's a bad thing to be hungry and not have enough to eat, he ought to be glad that another fellow who is not idle is not suffering in the same way."

"Felix Holt" is the expression of another of George Eliot's themes, i. e. class. She does not discuss caste pro or con but she asserts her democracy by upholding the honour of the working-man. Her ideal men are few but three of them, - Caleb Garth, Adam Bede, and Felix Holt are

working-men. Caleb and Adam make of work an ideal, a purpose in life. Both have the same scathing scorn for poor work, the same earnest feeling of duty to do good work, the same honor for labor. In fact Caleb Garth makes of his reverence for labor a sort of religion.

"Caleb Garth often shook his head in meditation on the value, the indispensable might of that myriad headed, myriad-handed labor by which the social body is fed, clothed and housed. It had laid hold of his imagination in boyhood. The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal-shouts of the workmen, the roar of the furnace, the thunder and flash of the engine

were a sublime music to him; the felling and lading of timber and the huge trunk vibrating star-like in the distance along the high-way, the crane at work on the hearth, the piled-up produces in ware-houses, the precision and variety of muscular effort wherever exact work had to be turned out - all these sights of his youth had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets, had made a philosophy for him without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology. His early ambition had been to have as effective a share as possible in this sublime labor which was peculiarly dignified by him with the name of "business"

Their feeling for work gives Caleb Garth and Adam Bede manliness and moral beauty. It is with them an expression of altruism. Here again, we get back to the ethical basis in every problem. The dignity of labor, the worth of work to the worker and mankind is but another phase of her altruistic teaching.

Here, too, one may make ship-wreck of his life by the lower choice. Blinded by false ambition and ignorance of his own incapacity, a man may ruin his own life and the lives of others, and render himself worthless, or even injurious. Amos Barton would have been a success in a humbler place in life. As a clergyman, he is

a miserable failure. His own life is without value, and it is his incapacity which makes the necessity for the overwork which kills his noble wife.

Fred Vincy seems about to ruin himself in the same way by trying to become a clergyman. Wise-eyed Mary Garth saves him by absolutely refusing to marry him if he is to take orders. Thereby she saves him from becoming a weakling and a fraud and makes a man of him.

Felix Holt represents the opposite idea, the man who is capable of filling a far more brilliant sphere than that of the hand-worker, yet who chooses to stay in the station where he was born that he

may help his class.

Felix Holt is the climax of George Eliot's teaching of the altruism of the working man. He sees that the place where his life will be of most value is in his own station; he is moved by a great idea which he finds in line with his own work, that of helping his own class, and in this way giving himself and his life for others.

He scorns the baseness, the mean pride of place which he sees in work and classes so-called "above" him. His declaration of independence is honest and sturdy; it is the very expression of fine manliness. "This place is not a very fine place for a good many of the people in it. But I've made up

my mind that it shan't be the worse for me, if I can help it. They may tell me I can't alter the world—that there must be a certain number of sneaks and robbers in it and if I don't lie and filch, somebody else will. Well, then, somebody else shall, for I won't."

Her feeling about money is in harmony with her teaching concerning work. To George Eliot, money is not one of the world's rare gifts; she is either indifferent to it or thinks her people better off without it. Her heroes and heroines are as indifferent as she. Dorothea and Esther each renounce a fortune and an estate with no regret, even with joy. Felix Holt declares his resolution to remain forever a poor man; Lydgate scorns the

mere money-getting side of his profession; Ladislav refuses an ill-gotten fortune with angry contempt. Mary Garth is the finest in this respect, for when the dying old miser, Featherstone, begs her to destroy his last will, an act by which he meant to make Fred Vincy rich, she withstands bribes, threats, and entreaties. "I will not let the close of your life soil the beginning of mine", is her brave, strong response.

Yet George Eliot shows us the hindrances poverty may place in man's way in the debts and wretchedness of Sydgate and of the Tullivers and the Bartons. On the other hand, Esther and Felix lead a happy and helpful life in their poverty. Daniel Deronda uses money to

further altruistic ends, and thus shows how it may be a good.

In "Silas Marner" we see how the mere love of the gold itself can possess and paralyze a human heart. But Silas is saved by the loss of his money and learns that love and service are worth far more than all the golden hoards his cottage could hold. When it is again given back to him, he estimates it at its actual value and thus is able to get the true use of it.

The money problem appears also in "Middlemarch" in the story of old Mr. Featherstone. We see the sordid souls and lives caused by the money-greed in the flock of vulture-relatives who frequent Featherstone Court waiting for the old man to die.

Money has atrophied their souls and Mr. Featherstone's as well. We see in Fred Vinny the deplorable effect upon growing character of the expectation of wealth. It would have been an evil day indeed for Fred Vinny had the first will been the true one, for, possessed of a fortune, he could not have been saved even by the sane and strong Mary Garth. In Mr. Featherstone himself, we see the terrible effect money can work on the human soul, - the meanness, the suspicion, the petty trickery, the malice, the degradation. This novel alone might show us that gold is not a gift of the gods, according to George Eliot.

After all, at bottom it is in

this problem as in all, - another phase of her presentation of altruism and egoism. Money itself is neither a good nor an evil but becomes the one or the other according as the use made of it is egoistic or altruistic.

In "Daniel Deronda" and "Felix Holt," George Eliot touches the subject of heredity. Felix Holt, extraordinary as he is, is a product of his class, a man of the people. He feels his place with his class, his mission is among them. Daniel Deronda is ignorant of his Jewish birth, but the power of blood in him makes itself felt and brings him to the point where it wants but the desired revelation to make him a most ardent Jew, the would-be deliverer of his nation.

We see this, although to a less extent, in *Romola*, a true di Bardi; in *Esther*, a gentle-woman when she did not know the title was hers by birth. *Romola* shows us the gracious helpfulness of the ideal lady. *Esther* chooses love and goodness as being far above pride of birth.

Knowing George Eliot's belief and purpose, - we might expect her to treat religion as one of her chief problems, but as we have already discovered, it is not a part of her purpose to make any direct attack upon religion. She impresses her belief in the ethical teaching which is the very heart of her books. She presents many clergymen and many religious characters, but views all with a generous

tolerance. She is impartial in her portrayal of all sects and seems to have the same feeling toward Anglican churchmen, Dissenters, Methodists and Jews. She pictures no atheists. She exhibits respect for religion but subjects it to the same analysis which the rest of her problems undergo. Religion is a problem of egoism and altruism also. Religion might be supposed to cause and foster altruism in its growth, but George Eliot shows us that there is a great deal of religion which is not spiritual, which is mere ceremonial and name, or which is selfishness in religion's guise. She presents egoistic clergymen in Mr. Tyke or Amos Barton, altruistic ones in Mr.

Farebrother and Mr. Irvine, with
 the highest type in the saved
 and savor, - Mr. Tryan. She shows
 us the flower of perfection,
 religion can produce in Dinah.
 In Savonarola, she gives us the
 study of a human being under
 religious and egoistic influence.
 But that she believes it to be the
 altruistic teaching which is the
 saving force, we can see by
 looking at her principal characters.
 Romola, Felix Holt, Daniel Deronda,
 Adam Bede, Dorothea, Maggie, do
 not depend on religion nor are they
 deeply influenced by it. Nor are
 Gwendolen, Esther, or in fact any
 of her erring souls saved by it.
 But she believes in its spiritual
 importance to the world in
 that it includes her own beloved
 belief of altruism which is to

save the world. Doubtless she refrains from attack upon the part which she did not believe, partly because she knew that to destroy the one half of their faith meant to many, many human souls the destruction of the whole, and therefore the loss of the part which she desired to see an active force in human lives.

George Eliot treats a material theme in many of her novels, clerical life in her first stories, Methodism in "Adam Bede", Florentine history in "Romola", politics in "Felix Holt", medicine in "Middlemarch", and Judaism in "Daniel Deronda". This gives sinew and color to her books and saves them from the tonelessness of too much ethics

and psychology. They are brought down out of the upper air of philosophical analysis to the solid earth of something which might be called, to a certain extent, material. George Eliot's learning is so great and her intellectual power so strong that her handling of these themes gives to her books breadth and depth to a remarkable degree.

She makes of these themes also weapons to fight the battle for her ethical purpose. In "Scenes from Clerical Life," she teaches that religion itself may be egoistic and that it is only when it is altruistic that it can be a saving force in human lives. In her treatment of Methodism, she shows the glory of altruism

can attain in a human soul in the patient, self-sacrificing Seth and the saintly Dinah.

In Savonarola we have an intense altruistic soul, hating evil and yearning to see Florence gathered into the kingdom of God, but the egoism of his own desire for power over men is nearly as strong, and the two elements unite in fearful struggle. For Florence itself, Dolfo Spini and his followers represent egoism, Savonarola and the Piagnoni, altruism. The Radical politics and social reform of Felix Holt are plainly but an exposition of her familiar teaching. Felix denounces his party bitterly when it would employ the selfish and unprincipled

measures of a Johnson, would make men careless though their brethren in the next district be starving so long as they themselves gain, or would stir up riot. He cares for the Radical party only in that it seems to offer more chance for opportunity and redress to the laborers and the poor. But he cares for his party only in so far as it can accomplish social reforms. If it cannot help humanity, there is no virtue in it.

Medicine in "Middlemarch" is the great idea which moves an altruistic soul. It embodies the spirit of reform to Sydgate and is to him the means by which he can contribute to the advancement of science, and help all humanity of the present

and future generations. But the egoism of one soulless woman is able to bring all this glorious promise to naught.

In "Daniel Deronda", Judaism is the great idea which lifts Daniel's soul above the mundane egoism of ordinary trivial souls and makes him a character able to save Gwendolen. We have altruism and egoism shown in this religion also, - the Cohens are egoistic Jews, while Mirah and Mordecai make of their religion a spiritual force which elevates their natures and makes their lives of value. In this book, we are given an idea great enough to inspire and guide a life into altruistic success.

Chapter IV
Value of George Eliot's Work.

We are told that there is a melancholy philosophy in George Eliot's books, and Abba Goold Woolson bewails with more sensibility than sense the woeful failures portrayed by this author. The critic has evidently not found herself sufficiently interested to read carefully the ending of several of the novels, for she asserts that *Romola* "ends her forlorn days among strangers, in noble self-immolation and as a kind of sister of charity", and that "poor Gwendolen's lot is the saddest of all, since she has not, like the others, an untroubled conscience to sustain her in the wreck of all her hopes." *Romola*, in fact, returned to her native city, Florence, after an

absence which was not lengthy and spent the rest of her life there, providing for Tessa and the children and helping those about her. Gwendolen's end is the highest of all, for she is a new woman, brought by pain up out of the depths of sin and saved to a better life.

It is true that George Eliot does portray material failure. None of her people are successful from the world's point of view for they do not attain wealth, fame or even philanthropic greatness, according to the world's opinion. A Felix Holt or a Daniel Deronda could never attract the world's attention by the accomplishment of their respective purposes. George Eliot's people, many of them, go farther

and fail to accomplish their own purposes in life: Sydgate is thwarted in his medical reform, Dorothea never helps in any great work for humanity, Maggie dies a scorned outcast in the world where she had hoped to help, Dinah exchanges preaching for marriage. But we have shown already that George Eliot had a moral purpose in presenting such failures, that the individual was in no case to blame but that the books were written to arraign society by showing how it can and does thwart the power of usefulness of such original, altruistic souls. But they succeed so far as in them lies in fulfilling their ideals, and, with regard to such careers, we agree

with the poet

"Who does the best his circumstance allows
Does well, acts nobly, angels could no more"

In the light of George Eliot's view of life, not one of her heroes or heroines are failures, for everyone attains moral success. Everyone wins the victory over self and lives the altruistic life.

Sydney never forgets his ideal and descends to the point of being satisfied with money-getting. He is altruistic even in his defeat for he gives up what is dearer than life itself as a sacrifice, not for his own gain but to satisfy the demands of a wife. Mr. Tresselt gives himself for others to the point even of forfeiting life; Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda fulfill their life ideals in perfect altruism.

Dorothea remains the sweet saint she always was, and exercises her ardent unselfishness in the home and in raising Ladislaw to a higher plane of manhood. Dinah, stopped by Conference from preaching, yet expends herself in neighborhood charities to the poor and sick and becomes the altruist of the home; Rono la nobly takes upon herself the care of the little group whom Tito had wronged and has Florence as a field for the exercise of her charity.

But greater success than this even is the portion of those who have won a hard-fought victory over sin. Adam Bede once struck down in wrath the man who had wronged him

but at the end he feels only sorrowful pity for him; Janet conquers her enslaving habit and becomes a blessing to the community; Esther rejects a life of luxury to marry the man she loves and to share in carrying out his altruistic purpose; Gwendolen conquers her worst self, the last victory being the letter to Deronda on his wedding-day which it cost her pain to write, and lives thereafter an unselfish life; Maggie turns from the pleadings of the man she loves and returns to be misjudged, insulted, and scorned, all for the sake of duty to others.

George Eliot herself has expressed in a fine, strong sentiment her conception of

failure. Felix Holt says: "But I'm proof against that word failure. I've seen behind it. The only failure a man ought to fear is failure in cleaving to the purpose he sees to be best. As to just the amount of result he may see from his particular work - that's a tremendous uncertainty; the universe has not been arranged for the gratification of his feelings - as long as a man sees and believes in some great good, he'll prefer working toward that in the way he's best fit for, come what may. I put effects at their minimum, but I'd rather have the minimum of effect, if it's of the sort I care for, than the maximum of effect I don't care for - a lot of fine things

that are not to my taste; and if they were, the conditions of holding them while the world is what it is, are such as would jar on me like grating metal?

It seems to me that the question as to whether George Eliot is a pessimist is thus answered and with sufficient proof, in the negative. As for the accusation that she does not devote much effort to depicting the joyous side of life, we reply that her conception of life was so earnest and so deep, and her ethical purpose had such intensity that it begot a serious habit of thought. If I may borrow two of Waldstein's terms, - her "Hebraism" overpowers her "Hellenism."

But that she presents

a gloomy and morbid view of life is not true. To the question of the pessimist, "Is life worth living?" she gives an emphatic answer in the brave, strong words of Felix Holt: "The fact is, there are not many easy lots to be drawn in the world at present and, such as they are, I am not envious of them. I don't say life is not worth having; it is worth having to a man who has some sparks of sense and feeling and bravery in him. And the finest fellow of all would be the one who could be glad to have lived because the world was chiefly miserable and his life had come to help someone who needed it. He would be the man who had the most powers and the fewest selfish

wants"

Surely the question as to any power of injury there could be in George Eliot's books needs no further answer. How any human soul could find anything to shake his belief in the Infinite or to discourage him in life in her books is almost beyond comprehension.

After a study of George Eliot's novels, it is inevitable that we should turn her analysis back upon herself and test her as to success or failure as she tested her heroines. That George Eliot is a thorough altruist in her heart, her books prove. Her letters and conversation add further proof that she did care with her whole soul for the betterment of mankind.

George Eliot is in character the very type she has pictured. She has the broad and deep intellectual nature, the sensitive emotional nature which gives her that tolerant, tender sympathy and thus loving fellowship with her kind, the deep moral nature which makes the ethical the true basis of life, all united in the desire and power to help mankind. It is the uniting of the highest power of mind, heart, soul, and hand.

We must then put the question she has taught us to ask. Is she moved by a great idea? Does she fulfill her ideal, - carry out her ethical purpose? Is she a success?

She is moved by a great

idea. She would teach the world the moral lesson which she felt with all the earnestness of her being, would teach and convert and save human beings as Felix Holt did Esther or Daniel Deronda, Gwendolen. She uses the best means in her power the means which was provided for her when she was endowed with genius. She knew it to be a good means for average humanity will take ethical teaching in a novel when it refuses to pay any heed to a sermon. She was an artist as well as a moral teacher; she loved and created beauty and made this beauty the incarnation of her moral idea. She certainly, then, fulfills her ideal, is moved by a great idea,

and carries it out worthily.

The question as to her success depends upon the effect of her books upon her readers collective and individual. If she can give the higher vision to one human soul and turn that individual to the better life, her work is worth while. We can not judge concerning such an effect upon humanity in general. It is certainly not the fault of George Eliot if such a result is not accomplished. The high value which men have placed upon her work is evident in the fact that George Eliot is counted among the great of earth.

As for her effect upon the individual, what human being possessed of the power of

the tomb,
Unread forever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have
made more glorious,
For us who strive to follow. May
I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
That cup of strength in some
great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed
pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no
cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a
good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the
world.

mental sight and of a conscience
 can help seeing his own
 egoistic qualities, can help
 looking with moral enthusiasm
 upon her beautiful ideal, can
 help longing and resolving to
 be better?

Then George Eliot has
 succeeded and the fulfillment
 is already begun of her
 beautiful prayer, in which
 she gives the revelation of her
 heart's deepest purpose and her
 life's highest ideal.

"O may I join the choir invisible
 Of those immortal dead who live again
 In minds made better by their presence;
 In pulses stirred to generosity,
 In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
 For miserable aims that end with self,
 In thoughts sublime that pierce the night
 like stars,

And with their mild persistence
 urge man's search,
 To master issues,
 So to live is heaven;
 To make undying music in the world,
 Breathing as beautiful order
 that controls,
 With growing sway the growing
 life of man.
 So we inherit that sweet purity,
 For which we struggled, failed, and
 agonized,
 With widening retrospect that
 bred despair.
 Rebellious flesh that would not be
 subdued,
 A vicious parent shaming still
 its child
 Poor anxious penitence is quick
 dissolved;
 Its discords, quenched by meeting
 harmonies,

Die in the large and charitable air.
 And all our rarer, truer, better self,
 That sobbed religiously in
 yearning song,
 That watched to ease the burthen
 of the world,
 Laboriously tracing what
 must be,
 And what may yet be better-saw
 within
 A worthier image for the sanctuary,
 And shaped it forth before the
 multitude
 Divinely human, raising
 worship so
 To higher reverence more mixed
 with love—
 That better self shall live till
 human Time
 Shall fold its eyelids, and the
 human sky
 Be gathered like a scroll within

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